THE SHORT STORY MAGAZINE

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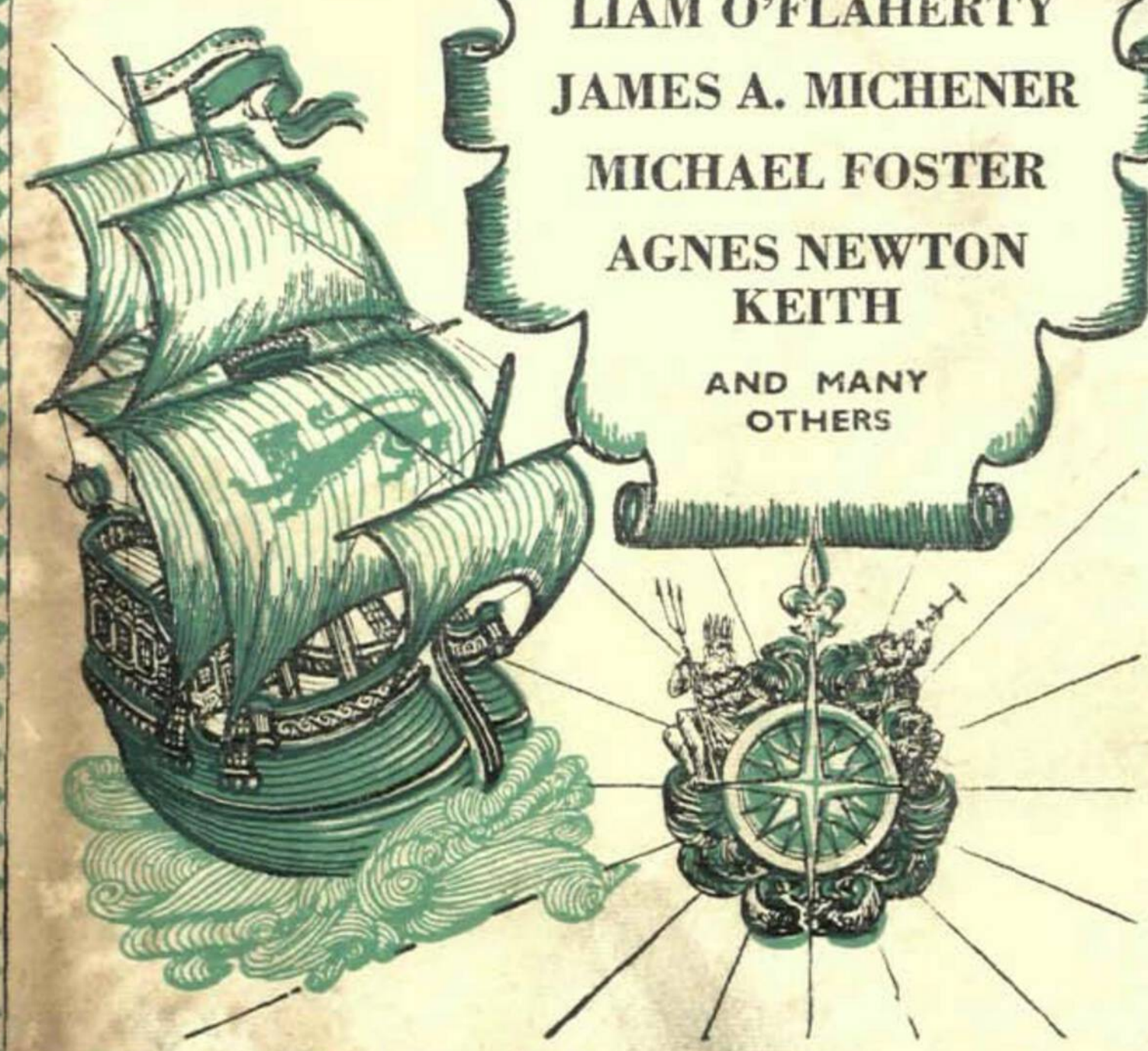

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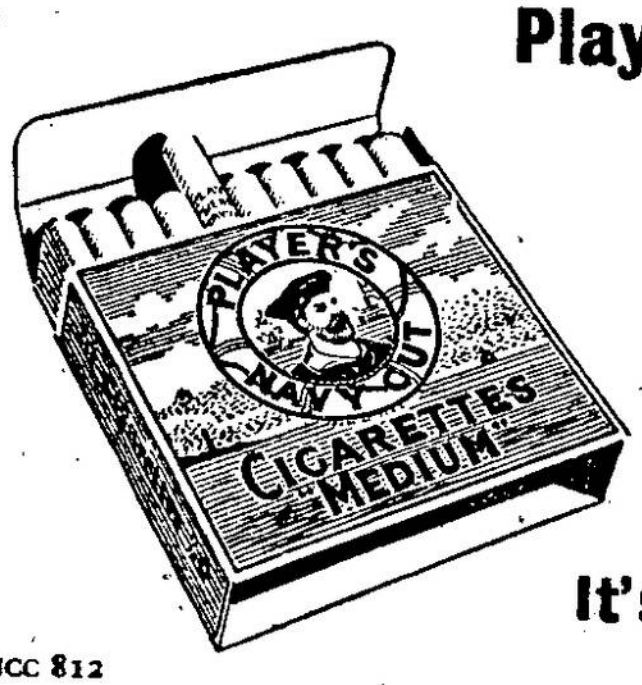

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It's the tobacco that counts

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ARGOSY

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Heart's Delight

SHINING white clouds in the cherry trees tangled,
And over the orchard snowing;
Silver wild cherries on the hill-side spangled,
And bright among bronze oaks blowing:
So white, so bright, so fragrantly
Heart's delight blossoms in me.

Swallows come back to their endless careering
In love and in finest feather;
Swerving down, close to the cowslips nearing,
Then high in the golden weather:
In air so bright, with such a flight,
Dances on wings my heart's delight.

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE,
Elizabeth's Song

ENCHANTED WATER

His shining feathers were gay with all the colours of the rainbow

by LIAM O'FLAHERTY

NEARLY every bit of land around this lake, the old fisherman said, is named after some kind of bird. The broad flat crag where we're sitting is called the Sea Gull's Perch. It was given that name because sea gulls come down here from the high southern cliffs when bad weather makes it impossible for them to get any food from the raging sea.

Sea gulls are very clever birds. They always know beforehand when a storm is coming. If you look up from the village on a fine summer day and you see a crowd of them walking about on these smooth grey flags, or flying low over the lake out there in front, with their legs hanging and their eyes searching the water for a morsel of food, then you may be sure that the weather is going to break before many hours have passed.

That low cliff that rises sheer above the far side of the lake, with ivy growing all along its face, is called the Heron's Rock. There are four herons standing on top of it now, with their wings raised up about their heads, like long-legged fellows trying to protect the backs of their necks from a shower of rain. They are even smarter than the sea gulls, although it would be hard to say where they keep their brains, and their heads so small compared to the rest of them.

You never see them except when a spell of dry weather has made the lake water low like it is now. Then they can stand on the bottom and fish for eels with their long necks. It really is a mystery to me how they know the right time to come, for I swear that I never in all my life have known them to arrive a day too soon or too late.

The lake itself has two names. It's officially known as the Black Lake, but the local people call it the Enchanted Water among themselves. It looks lovely and gay now in the sunlight, with swans swimming along its smooth white surface and curlews standing in sleep on the little yellow patches that have gone bare and water-hens chasing one another among the reeds.

You would agree, though, that it was given two fitting names, if you came here in winter, when the surrounding cliffs and its own

deep water are black with rain and a sound like the whispering of sad women comes from the reeds that are shaken by the fierce wind.

In the old days, people believed that it was haunted by a wicked spirit. Indeed, some of them believe that still. It would be hard to find a person in our village brave enough to come here alone on a dark windy night. The young women carry away some of its water in big sea shells and use it for charms. They say that no woman ever dies barren or in childbirth if she says certain prayers and then drinks the lake water out of a sea shell.

It is also supposed to be very good for cattle, the water of this lake. People drive their beasts here from all over the countryside, especially in spring, to drink their fill. It's claimed that no horse is as swift as a horse that drinks from the Enchanted Water. Oh, people sometimes say more than the truth ; but there is a grain of truth in everything that's handed down from ancient times.

It is also handed down that a saint lived here alone, a very long time ago. They say he was so grateful to the birds for keeping him company that he blessed them and put his curse forever on anybody that would do them harm. For that reason, the place has remained a sanctuary down to the present day for nearly every kind of lake bird in creation. Even the most daring and mischievous boy in our village would rather cut off his right hand than throw a stone at one of the birds that live here, or rob their nests.

The birds themselves know they are safe. They are not the least bit afraid of people. Curlews are the most suspicious and wary creatures in existence, as a general rule. Yet there are two of them standing on that black rock down below us, with their heads under their wings, feeling just as secure as children being rocked in a cradle.

The saint is also supposed to have divided up all the ground along the edge among the different tribes of birds, in order to keep them from fighting one another. They say it was he named each little spot after the kind of bird that he let build its nest there and take its ease in the sun. That part of the story can't be entirely true, because I myself was responsible for giving its name to the Wild Drake's Cave about thirty years ago. Previous to that time, it had no name at all to my certain knowledge.

You can see the cave's entrance from here, over on the far side of the lake, a short distance to the right of the herons. You can't miss it. It's like a round black window set in the smooth grey face of the cliff. There is a big patch of white moss almost directly overhead and trout are jumping in the shadows down below. The hole is a good few yards from the water's edge now, but when the lake is full a swimmer could almost reach it with his upraised hand. Even so, the smallest child couldn't pass his body through it and the

smoothness of the surrounding cliffs keeps out creatures like rats and weasels. Only birds can enter. It's an ideal nesting place.

As I said before, it was nearly thirty years ago that I gave its name to that cave. This is how it happened. One morning in late spring, I brought my cow down to the low shore, far over there to the right, where you see three black horses standing knee-deep in the water. While my cow was having her drink, I noticed a duckling that was trying to hide itself among the muddy grey stones by the lake's edge. It made hardly any effort to escape as I approached. When I picked it up and laid it on my palm, it just gave one little squeak and that was all. It was half dead with cold and hunger ; a poor little defenceless thing still wearing the down of infancy. As I could find no trace of its parents anywhere, I came to the conclusion that it was either deserted or lost. So I put it inside my shirt and took it home with me.

As luck would have it, my wife was raising a clutch of ducklings at the time. Since she couldn't find a brooding duck, it was a hen that hatched out the eggs for her. Then the hen deserted the ducklings as soon as they were born. I suppose the foolish creature got frightened when she saw the strange cut of them and took to her heels. In any case, my wife had to put them on a litter of straw in a wooden box near the kitchen fire and tend them herself. They were not much older than the wild creature I had found.

" In God's name," I said to my wife, as I took the bird from inside my shirt, " put this little one in with the others."

She stared at it and said : " What's that you've got ? "

" It's a wild duckling," I said.

" Where did you get it ? " she said suspiciously.

I told her and she nearly went out of her mind on the spot.

" Take it out of the house," she said, after spitting on the floor and making the sign of the cross between herself and the wild creature. " It's enchanted. You had no right to touch it. You'll bring a curse on the house."

I reasoned with her, saying that I would have been much more likely to bring a curse on the house by letting a helpless little bird die for want of warmth and nourishment.

" It was lucky for me that I brought it home," I said, " because the curse would surely fall on me if I left it where it was, to be devoured by a heathen weasel or a hawk. It would then. It would fall right down on top of me and I'd deserve it, for refusing to help a defenceless little bird."

When I put it to her that way, she got calm and changed her mind about letting the wild duckling stay in the house.

" Since you didn't steal it from its mother," she said, " or

lay a violent hand on it, there can be no harm in keeping it under our roof. I'll put it in the box with the others."

The news soon spread through the village that we had a wild bird from the Enchanted Water staying with us. The people came running from all directions to have a look at it. They were very disappointed when they saw it feeding out of a little trough on the kitchen floor with the tame ones. The wild creature had already made itself at home and the other orphans had taken kindly to the foundling. "It doesn't look enchanted at all," the people said. "You could hardly tell the difference between it and the others. It's just an ordinary little black duckling."

The wild one was a little quicker in its movements and a shade darker in colour, maybe, than the tame ones. That was all the difference you could notice. In any case, the very young and the very old, among human beings as well as among other creatures, all look alike and behave alike, no matter how much they may differ in race or breeding.

"Of course it doesn't look enchanted," I said, "and there's no reason why it should. It's a holy creature, as can easily be seen by its gentleness and its good nature."

When I told them how I had found it and why I took it home with me, they all agreed that I had done the right thing.

"It's a holy creature, all right," they admitted, "and there is no enchantment attached to it. Happy for you! It seems that the saint has given you one of his birds to foster."

It was not very long before the foundling began to show clear signs that it was different from the others and that its wild nature could not be tamed. It became more and more suspicious with each day that passed. It was always on guard. Instead of getting used to my wife and myself, it took to avoiding us in every possible way. It resisted all our efforts to make friends with it. It had a horror of being touched and of being hemmed into a corner.

When summer came and my wife put the whole clutch out into a shed that had a small yard around it, we could hardly catch sight of the wild creature at all. It always ran when it heard one of us approach and it wouldn't touch its food while we were in the yard.

"It won't be long with us now," I said to my wife. "As soon as its wings are strong enough to take the high air, it will be heading for the Enchanted Water where it belongs."

"It would be a pity," my wife said, "to let him go and he such a lovely bird. From a drake like that, we could get a new breed of ducks that would astonish the whole countryside. Do you think it would be a sin to clip his wings, so that he couldn't fly away?"

True enough, the foundling was growing into a beautiful drake, whose shining feathers were gay with all the colours of the

rainbow. He was a sight that brought gladness to the heart, through the splendour of his body and the supple quickness of his movements. I didn't blame my wife for being tempted to covet him. Even so, I wouldn't hear of her suggestion.

"Is it talking of laying a violent hand on a holy creature you are?" I said to her. "Shame on you! It would be a terrible sin to clip his wings and deprive him of a power bestowed by God."

"Maybe it would," she said, "but it would be a far greater sin to let him go before he has left us a clutch of his kind."

"Let him go when he feels like it," I said. "It's not for us to stop him by means of sinful tricks."

Then my wife smiled in a peculiar way and said: "Maybe he won't be in such a hurry to leave us after all."

"What do you mean?" I said to her.

"I think," she said, "that he has taken a great liking to one of our ducks. It's that slender little thing that's almost as black and shining as himself. They've always been together and he's terribly jealous of her. So, maybe it won't be necessary to clip his wings. That little black duck can't fly very far."

Begob, she was right. The wild drake doted on the little black duck. Not only did he hardly ever leave her side, but he wouldn't let anybody else come near her. Even when his wings got so strong that he could fly high and far, he showed no sign of wanting to leave us for good. No matter how far away he flew, he always came back again and settled down beside his comrade. With his beak near the ground and his wings hanging, he chattered to her excitedly, as if he were giving her an account of his adventures. It seemed that he was bound to our yard by a chain far stronger than any ever fashioned by the hand of man: the golden chain of love.

When summer passed and the first big autumn rains began to flood the marsh below the village, our ducks went almost mad with joy. They were off at dawn, just as soon as my wife let them out of their yard, to spend all day swimming about the flooded marsh and foraging in its muddy water that was thick with small fry of all sorts. My wife had to keep calling and calling them at sundown before they paid heed to her and came home.

It was then I realized that the wild drake was planning to take his comrade away with him. Day after day he worked from morning to night, teaching her to swim and fly as well as himself. When she got tired by her exertions and refused to obey him, he whacked her mercilessly about the head with his beak. Then again he would wheedle and coax her, until he persuaded her to do as she was bid.

'Faith, it wasn't long before she could fish under water like a cormorant and fly a good distance, too, fairly high up in the air.

The two of them were always the last to come home. Even in the yard, they now kept entirely apart from the others. The little black duck was beginning to be just as suspicious and wary as her drake.

"Do you see what he's doing to her?" I said. "She'll soon be as wild as he is. Then he'll take her away with him."

"Have no fear," my wife said. "That little duck knows what's good for her. She won't leave her comfortable home."

She was wrong that time, because we got up one morning a few weeks later to find that the wild drake and his comrade were missing from the yard. "They've gone," I said, "and I knew they would be. I awoke in the night and heard wild geese cackling as they flew along the roof of the sky towards the Enchanted Water. It was the cackling of the wild geese that sent them on their way. We've lost him now and our little black duck as well."

"Have no fear," my wife said, "our little black duck will be glad to come back, after she has spent a few nights on that perishing lake. Then the drake will follow her back to the yard."

My wife was wrong again, because the black duck never came back. Indeed, we got no tale or tidings for many months of the couple that had eloped. Many and many a time that winter as I searched for them all round the shores of the lake, high and low, I thought they had been carried off into enchantment. It was hard not to believe it, listening to the forlorn cries of the curlews re-echoing through the cliffs and the sad whispering of the reeds rising up through the mist, like voices from the other world chanting a lament.

Then spring came and I finally discovered them one fine April morning, when the sunlight was dancing on the lake and the sky was full of singing larks. I was standing over there near the Heron's Rock when I saw them come out of the hole in the cliff. The drake came out first and looked about him carefully after he had settled on the water. Then he called the duck. She flitted down gently, carrying two little ducklings on her back. She dropped them on the water beside the drake and went back into the cave for two more. She went back a second time for the fifth and last of her clutch.

Tears came into my eyes as I watched them swim away together over the sunlit water, with the drake out in front and the clutch in the middle and the mother bringing up the rear.

* * *

It is a fashion in this country if a man has special knowledge, to set him to some job exactly the opposite.

JOHN BUCHAN

MURDER BEFORE MEALS

"Darling, I have done it. Come at once"

by HENRY CECIL

A LOVELY woman was sitting in the dock at the Old Bailey. Mr. Justice Plank was summing up.

"I will now review the evidence, members of the jury," he said. "The accused is the wife of the man with whose murder she is charged. Until about six weeks before her husband disappeared she was apparently living with him on good terms. I say 'apparently,' members of the jury, because we all know that it is possible for a married couple to appear happy to others but, in fact, to be very far from happy. You must exercise your knowledge of the world on such a matter. As far as the evidence goes, however, there was no friction between them.

"About the 9th February last the husband disappeared and he was never seen again, unless the corpse, to which I will refer hereafter, is his. His absence was first noticed by an aunt, who questioned the accused about him. At that time, of course, there was not the slightest suspicion of foul play. His aunt simply asked where he was. The accused replied that he had gone to Scotland on business. We know now that that was untrue, or at least highly improbable, because the accused has quite frankly admitted that she lied.

"Subsequently, other inquiries were made by relatives of the missing man and the accused gave varying explanations for his absence. I need not detail those explanations, because you heard them all and the accused has admitted that they were all false. The accused has told you that her husband and she agreed to separate for a short time. She has said that she told lies about his absence because she did not want the real reason to be known. She asserts that her husband is still alive, and throughout she has stated, either by herself or through her counsel, that she is sure her husband will enter the court before the end of the trial. They had agreed not to communicate with each other during his absence. As you have heard, the police have made exhaustive inquiries from all hospitals and public institutions in the country to see whether the husband has been admitted to any one of them, ill or injured. The result has been purely negative.

"That is the evidence, members of the jury. The accused's husband is missing and the accused cannot explain why he does not return in her hour of need. Their separation, she said, was not because they were on bad terms, but simply because they thought it would be a good idea to have a short separation. The present trial has been widely publicized, and you may think that it is, at the least, very improbable that the husband, if alive and in his right mind, would not take some step to bring to the notice of this court that his wife is innocent of the charge. You have probably observed the accused looking anxiously from time to time to the doors of the court. Was that play acting, members of the jury, or does she really expect her husband to appear? Possibly the remaining evidence in the case will help you to answer that question.

"You will remember that the witness who first noticed the absence of the accused's husband stated that, although she was not in the least suspicious to begin with, she eventually became so because of a dream. The rules of evidence did not permit her to state what the dream was, but she says that, as a result of it, she asked the police to drag the river. The police have told you that they were at first unwilling to do so, but that subsequently the witness, Mrs. Larkins, made a statement to them which changed their minds.

"Mrs. Larkins has made the same statement to you and, although she was considerably cross-examined on the subject, she maintained that what she said was correct. She has told you that on an evening in early February—she cannot give the exact date—she met the accused, who is a neighbour of hers. It was late at night and the accused was assisting a man to carry something heavy out of a car parked by the river. Mrs. Larkins could not see the man properly, but she stated that he was the same height as the missing man. She could not see his face.

"Now a very curious thing happened in this court in regard to that matter. Although the prisoner's counsel had cross-examined Mrs. Larkins very severely about the entire incident, the prisoner herself admitted in evidence that it had taken place. She said that the man with her was, in fact, her husband. She refused, however, to state what they were carrying, saying that, if she did so, it might get her husband into trouble.

"You may think it is straining loyalty too far when a wife, who is liable to be hanged for his murder, refuses to save herself lest she should get him into trouble. However, just in case there might be some deep-laid plot by the husband to kill another man, dress him in his own clothes and then compel his wife to claim the amount due under life policies, I suggested that inquiries should be made from all life insurance companies. As a result of those inquiries it is plain that the husband was not insured at all.

"You are therefore completely in the dark, members of the jury, as to the crime which the husband was committing that night, and from the consequences of which the accused wishes to shield him. The only person who could have told you has refused to do so. But was it the husband whom she was assisting? Or was the husband merely a corpse which she and her lover were engaged in throwing into the river when seen by Mrs. Larkins?

"The rest of the evidence in the case may help you to solve that problem too. You have heard the evidence that a dead man was recovered from the river. That is not disputed. You have heard also that he was dressed in a suit from which every mark of identity had been removed except a small cleaner's mark which could easily pass unnoticed.

"You have heard the cleaner swear that the suit belonged to the missing man and that he had cleaned it frequently. He was quite positive on this matter. The accused herself admitted that the suit was exactly like one of her husband's and that they used to employ the cleaner who gave evidence. The body was in too great a state of decomposition to be identified, but the medical evidence showed that the skull had been fractured and that death was due to cerebral hæmorrhage, which could have been caused by the injury to the skull. The body was approximately the same size as that of the missing husband.

"The accused, as you are aware, has absolutely denied that she murdered her husband or had any part in his murder. She says that he is still alive and that the dead man is someone else. On the evidence, as I have so far reviewed it, you might have grave suspicions as to the guilt of the accused, but you might also feel that there was, perhaps, some measure of doubt in the matter. If that were the case the accused is entitled to be acquitted, as I have already told you once and as her counsel has told you at least six times.

"I come, therefore, to the final piece of evidence in the case, and you must consider whether, in view of that evidence, you feel justified in resolving your doubt against the accused or whether some doubt still remains. A letter was produced by the postmistress of Wardley—a village a few miles from where the accused and her husband lived. This letter was addressed poste restante to James Curley, Esq. Mr. Curley never called for the letter. It happened that a police inspector was talking to the postmistress and she showed it to him. The inspector took a chance and opened it. It said this: "Darling, I have done it. Come at once."

"The letter was unsigned, but two handwriting experts have been called by the prosecution and they have both stated that in their opinion the writing is that of the accused. The accused

denied that she wrote the letter and the defence called one expert. He said that, although the writing was very similar to that of the accused, it might well have been produced by someone copying from her writing. The prisoner was recalled and asked if she knew of anyone who might conceivably have tried to incriminate her. She said she had no enemies, as far as she knew.

"The prosecution say that this last piece of evidence clinches the matter. They say that, if the prisoner is innocent, you have got to accept as coincidences the missing husband, the lies by the wife as to his whereabouts, the unexplained and extraordinary incident of the car by the river, the body in the clothes of the husband and finally this letter.

"Counsel for the defence, on the other hand, says that the accused has sworn that she is innocent. He has invited you, not once but several times, to look at her and ask yourselves whether she seems the sort of woman who would murder her husband. He has, as it were, thrown the appearance of the prisoner into the balance against the weight of the actual evidence.

"Well, members of the jury, cases are to be tried upon the evidence, but it is, of course, quite right that you should pay close attention to a prisoner's demeanour, particularly in the witness-box —though due allowance must be made for his or her natural anxiety. But do you consider that you can read the prisoner's thoughts from her face or figure? If you think you can and you base your verdict upon such imaginings I cannot prevent you, but I am bound to remind you that you have sworn to try the prisoner according to the evidence.

"The prisoner is undoubtedly a singularly beautiful woman. Do you think it possible that her counsel has seized on that fact to make up for any deficiencies in her defence? It is entirely for you to judge. I will, indeed, go so far with defending counsel as to agree with him that the prisoner has not either a cruel or degraded face. She certainly has not a face on which is written 'I am a murderess.' But how much that can avail her in view of the evidence it is for you to say. Has everyone who appears in the dock to look like a criminal, and, if he does not, must he be acquitted?

"I leave such matters and, indeed, the whole of the case to your common sense, members of the jury. I have explained the law to you and you will follow my guidance upon all matters of law. The facts, however, are for you, and if you think I have expressed any opinion on them you will disregard it entirely and form your own.

"Now, will you please consider your verdict, bearing in mind, as I have said before, that it is not for the prisoner to prove her innocence but for the prosecution to prove her guilt beyond all reasonable doubt."

The jury retired. They returned within half an hour. They found the prisoner guilty. Before she was sentenced to death she was asked whether she had anything to say why sentence should not be passed on her according to law. She said she had. In clear and unfaltering tones she said this : " My Lord, I am innocent of the charge of which I have been convicted and I do not fear the sentence you are about to pronounce. I know that, before it is put into execution, my husband will return and prove me innocent. I would never harm my husband any more than he would harm me. Pronounce the sentence, my Lord. He will ensure that it is never carried out."

The Judge pronounced sentence of death, a man in the gallery stroked his beard, and a woman sobbed, but it was not the prisoner.

Twenty years later two prosperous-looking men sat in one of Hubbard's restaurants. They were completing their dinner and a business deal at the same time, and each of them was extremely satisfied with both.

It could not have been otherwise with the dinner. Years before, when the first Hubbard restaurant had been opened, a new standard in food had been set. You could dine at Hubbard's, as nowhere else, whether you were a gourmet and very particular, or whether you merely enjoyed good food and good wine and could not distinguish between the good and the exquisite in either.

It was not surprising that, three months after the first restaurant had been opened, a second was started, and, not long after that, a third and so on until, some five years after the opening of the first, there were fifty Hubbard restaurants distributed all over the country, each as good as the other and all as good as the first. This was a principle on which John Hubbard had always insisted. He would never open a new restaurant until he had satisfied himself that the employees he had chosen were artistes either in the cooking or service of food, according to their particular positions.

He himself was the master and the provision of food and wine was an art in which he was excelled by no one. He considered good eating and drinking to be as important to the human race as good music and good literature and that he had made a substantial contribution to the happiness of his country by opening his fifty restaurants. With the rise in wages after the last war there were comparatively few people who could not afford to go to Hubbard's —at any rate on a special occasion—and the average Englishman and Englishwoman were taught things about food of which they had never dreamed.

One of the two men was, in fact, John Hubbard, and the deal which he was completing was the sale of the entire Hubbard

organization to his friend William Collett. They were not intimate friends, but they were far more than mere business acquaintances. When John and his wife decided to retire they both agreed that they would sell to someone who seemed capable of carrying on the Hubbard tradition. William Collett was such a man. He had not, perhaps, John's genius, but he was deeply interested in the subject and very painstaking and John felt it would be extremely hard to find a more suitable purchaser.

William Collett was very keen on the proposition, but he was a business man and, having seen the figures supplied to him by Hubbard's, he knew the maximum price which he was prepared to pay. John, on the other hand, was quite prepared to sell to the right person for any reasonable amount which would enable him and his family to live in comfort for the rest of their lives. In consequence, as they drank their first glass of port, he accepted a sum which was some £10,000 less than William would have been prepared to pay. They drank a second glass of port to the success of their bargain.

"I knew we shouldn't fall out over the price," said William.

"You've done very well," said John, "but I'm perfectly satisfied, and that's all that matters. The only thing I want now is to complete the whole transaction as soon as possible. How soon can you send in your accountants to vet the books?"

"I shan't send them in at all, old boy. You've given me all the figures. Either they're true or false. I'm prepared to believe they're true. Why should I spend a lot of money just to prove that you're not a liar?"

"Well, it's entirely up to you, Bill. The figures I've given you are, of course, taken from the books and are absolutely correct—but for Heaven's sake don't feel I shall be in the least hurt if you have the books examined. After all, half a million is a lot of money."

"I won't hear another word about it, old boy. We've had deals together before and I know you. I'd even prefer one of us to draft the contract of sale rather than go to solicitors—but we can't go so far as that. My accountants have done very nicely as it is, working out the proper price for me to pay. Pass the port, old boy, please."

"I'm sure you'll make a great success of it," said John, "because you'll always take the greatest possible interest in the food itself. It means continuous travelling, but, as you like that and always find something new in each part of England you visit, that won't worry you."

"I shall love it. And my wife too. And when we've had

enough of it we can always sell out like you. It's twenty years since you began, isn't it ? "

" Just on."

" What you must have found quite the hardest part was getting started. Your food can be first class and your service equally so, but unless you have sufficient capital to enable you to pay big rents and indulge in really heavy advertising it's almost impossible to get the public to come before you go bankrupt."

John smiled. " As a matter of fact, I did indulge in really heavy advertising."

" But you told me you hadn't any capital worth speaking of when you started. You surely didn't get credit ? "

" No—I certainly didn't get any credit."

" I don't understand it then—or had you a rich uncle ? "

" No—I hadn't a rich uncle. As a matter of fact it was a poor, sick tramp who provided the necessary."

" Pass the port, old boy, and repeat that."

" I said it was a poor, sick tramp who enabled us to start."

" A sandwich man, I suppose."

" Not at all. A dead man, shortly after we knew him."

" With an estate in Australia which he left to you, because you befriended him ? "

" Not at all—at the end he hadn't even his own clothes."

" I give it up—but it's intriguing. Take some port and tell me."

" If I do tell you, it must be in absolute confidence."

" Of course, old boy, but what's the mystery ? "

" Well, if it were known to the police, both my wife and I might get six months."

" This is really interesting. You know I'll keep it to myself. Besides there are no witnesses and you can always say I'm a liar. I am a bit of one anyway. Fire ahead—but just pass the port first."

" All right ; now I'm selling the business, I'd rather like to tell someone. You'll be the only person besides Juliet and me who'll know."

" You honour me, old boy."

" I think I do really—but never mind. Let's go and sit in the office. It'll be quieter. Waiter, bring the port to the office, please."

They went to the office and sat down in arm chairs.

" Come a bit closer," said John. " I don't want to shout."

They arranged themselves and the port satisfactorily, and John began.

" D'you remember the Hubbard murder case about twenty years ago ? "

"I can't say I do, off-hand."

"Well, you can take it from me that there was one. My wife was the accused."

"Good Lord! not really?"

"The jury didn't let her off. They convicted her."

"Who was she supposed to have murdered?"

"Me."

William took a quick look at the port and then at John.

"When do I laugh?" he asked.

"Any time you like, but it's perfectly true."

"Don't be silly, old boy. I know we've both had a good dinner, but let's be reasonable. I can see you now and I saw your wife last week. You've both worn remarkably well in the circumstances, I must say."

"Well, if you don't want to hear any more you've only to say so."

"You're not being really serious, old boy, are you?"

"I am."

"But how come, old boy?"

"That's what I'm going to tell you—if you want to hear."

"I'm sorry if I sounded a bit incredulous—but you must admit it sounds tall."

"Undoubtedly, but here are the facts as they were presented to the jury at the Old Bailey."

"Then she was really tried?"

"All right, I won't say any more. Have you been to any good shows lately?"

"I'm sorry, old boy, I won't do it again, I promise. Please go on. I believe everything you say. Were you at the Old Bailey?—but, of course not, you couldn't have been."

"As a matter of fact, I was."

"What! Did they bring in the body? But—no, that . . ." and there William broke off. He was really puzzled. John sipped his port and went on.

"This was the case against my wife."

He then outlined the facts referred to in the summing up of Mr. Justice Plank.

"The case aroused very great interest. Most defended murder trials do, and when the accused happens to be a strikingly beautiful woman, with a lovely voice as well, the interest caused cannot fail to be tremendous. My wife's picture, which somehow or other found its way to the press agencies, was published widely, and she had many offers of remarriage—in the event of her acquittal—from admirers who had seen it.

"I had intended to make a dramatic entry after the Judge's summing up if it were unfavourable, but something about that summing up prompted me not to do so. You will remember that I read for the Bar, although I never practised, and odd passages from the text-books still stuck in my mind. I had a feeling about that summing up. I also remembered that, before now, a guilty person duly convicted has been acquitted on appeal by reason of a faulty summing up. I could always make my entry in the Appeal Court and I thought it was worth waiting.

"I notified my wife, through her solicitors, by a previously arranged code of what I was going to do, and they passed on the message, not knowing who I was and quite unaware of its meaning. I need hardly tell you that before my disappearance I was clean shaven. At the trial I had a moustache and beard, and hair dyed to the lighter colour of both. Even so, I listened from the gallery and not from the well of the court.

"In due course the appeal came on for hearing before the Lord Chief Justice and two King's Bench Judges. There I had most forcibly impressed on my mind the principle of English law—that it is better for a hundred guilty men to be acquitted than for one innocent man to be convicted. The case against my wife must have seemed conclusive to any impartial observer. She and I were the only two persons who knew her to be innocent. Yet, in the Court of Criminal Appeal, the three Judges appeared to me to be examining Mr. Justice Plank's summing up with a microscope of great power.

"I will not worry you with the technicalities of the matter. After a day's hearing the court decided that, having regard to some mistakes in the summing up, the conviction could not be upheld and must be quashed. My wife was free and I had not had to do anything. It was what I had hoped for but not expected.

"The day after her acquittal Mrs. Hubbard opened the first Hubbard restaurant. All the arrangements had, of course, been made in advance. As she left the Law Courts after her acquittal she had smilingly acknowledged the presence of the numerous reporters and posed for photographs. She granted an interview.

"'Now I am free,' she said, 'I shall do what my dear husband always wanted to do—open a restaurant. It will be on the Blank by-pass. John had made all the arrangements before we parted. I'm sure he'll come back to me now. You boys have been so good to me during my anxious days that if you can come and have a drink with me on the opening night—tomorrow—I shall be only too pleased.'

"A drink with a really beautiful woman who has been convicted and acquitted of murder was not to be refused, particularly

as a good deal of copy could probably be obtained at the same time.

"You don't, of course, remember the first days at our restaurant. I had been ready and was not taken unawares. I had risked everything and had supplies for thousands—and thousands came. They came in the first instance to look at my wife's lovely neck and to visualize what might have happened to it. But they were given food which many of them had never tasted before. You know now what I can do. I spent everything we had on making sure that everything would be superb; and superb it was.

"It was summer-time and we were really lucky in the weather. We filled the garden with tables—every room was filled with tables—and yet, once you sat down to your meal, it was as it is today—no waiting—yet no flurry—everything perfect. I had engaged hundreds of waiters for the first night and erected special emergency kitchens.

"After about a fortnight I appeared myself—in my beard, of course. I came as manager. My name was John Brown. Everyone believed that I was really James Curley and the police even interviewed me. I knew my rights, however, and, beyond telling them I was not and never had been James Curley, I said nothing at all. They no doubt said a good deal to themselves, but they could do nothing about it. The rumour that James Curley was also on view—although the law of libel prevented it from being mentioned in the papers—quickly spread, and people came down to see me as well.

"Gradually the interest in us as a pair of murderers died down, but the interest in our food did not. We were made from the first day and have never looked back. Perhaps you'll agree now that we went in for big advertising."

"Yes, old boy, but what about the body?"

"It was the body which gave me the whole idea. A tramp came begging to our house. He was obviously very ill—my wife and I were very much in love and our natural sympathy was even stronger than usual at the time. We took him in, made him as comfortable as possible and sent for our doctor. He told us it was a hopeless case and that the man had better go to the infirmary. We refused—and I really believe that that man's last few days were some of the happiest he had had. He literally cried for joy. He had probably never experienced such kindness before. It was no credit to us. We just felt we had to. We did all we could for him, but he died shortly afterwards of cerebral hæmorrhage.

"The doctor gave me a certificate, and it was while I was on my way to the registrar that the idea gradually came to me. My wife

and I had a lease of a house on the Blank by-pass and between £1,000 and £2,000. I had no job and did not seem likely to get a congenial one or one at which I could make a success. We had decided to turn our house into a restaurant. I had always had this flair for food, and my wife was a very capable cook and able to teach others.

" As I've told you before—you don't need the highest-paid chefs to run a good restaurant. All you require is really good food, really good recipes, a man like myself and a capable cook. I'll guarantee that there are thousands of men and women who, after a little training, could prepare the excellent dinner we had tonight. Well—our trouble was lack of capital.

" So many places had failed for that reason, and, although we knew our food would be exceptional, we couldn't afford to advertise to any great extent. To acquire a reputation in such circumstances would take a very long time. So, before committing ourselves, we tried to think of some publicity stunt we could produce to give the place a good start. On the way to the registrar I thought of this one.

" You'll say it was a mad idea—so it was, but we were prepared to take the risk. I could at any moment have proved who the dead man was and that I'd registered his death and that I was alive. The doctor's certificate proved that the man died of natural causes. So there was no chance of my wife or me being hanged. Naturally I made provision for the possibility of my dying before the trial.

" If everything had gone wrong and our conspiracy was brought to light, we could only have been given a short term of imprisonment for causing a public mischief and disposing of a dead body. We naturally didn't want that, but we were adventurers and very ambitious. Accordingly, as soon as I'd registered the death I talked to Juliet about my idea.

" As you know, she has great determination and I judged her capable of going through with it. She agreed. We put the tramp in a suit of mine on which we left only the cleaner's mark. I gave the skull a bit of a crack and then we threw him in the river.

" Unfortunately, we met Mrs. Larkins on the way. I hadn't intended that piece of evidence, as it weighted the case too much against Juliet.

" However, I managed not to show my face and we decided to carry on. The letter was written by me, imitating Juliet's handwriting. I did this so that she need not commit perjury in the witness-box.

" Had the police inspector not happened to come upon it we should have put him on the scent anonymously. The rest you

know—except that in due course we pretended to get married and I changed my name to Hubbard. Five years ago, you'll remember, I shaved off my beard and moustache. And that is the story behind Hubbard's restaurants."

William hesitated a moment or two before he made any comment. Then—" Very interesting," he said. " You won't think it offensive of me, old boy, will you, if I send in my accountants to look at your books after all ? "

* * *

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

Here is a collection of painters and others whose work you are unlikely to find in the National Gallery ! Score one point if you can identify the artist, and one each for the title and author of the work of fiction in which they appear. Connoisseurs of art should score the full total of twenty-seven points. The answers are on page 103.

1. *Charming, feckless and not above playing a confidence trick on a group of eminent professional men, this young artist proved a real problem child.*

2. *" It saves a model," said the Florentine painter to his reluctant wife, as he proposed that she should sit for five more pictures.*

3. *An impecunious philosopher, he had a spot of trouble with the whale, and with the town council, before the wall fell down and plunged his Creation into chaos.*

4. *He painted the portrait of a young Adonis, but it turned into a satyr, and the model stabbed him to death.*

5. *He was no painter ; but he created a living image.*

6. *This lovelorn young gentleman sat with his two fellow-artists at the lovely feet of their Irish model, and proposed to her twenty times !*

7. *Everyone's idea of an artist, starving and making love and exercising his temperament in a Paris attic, he made a luckier choice of sweetheart than his poet room-mate.*

8. *An A.R.A., he was nevertheless reputed to be quite unsuccessful at accurate reproduction !*

9. *She looked such a demure little copyist, painting in the Louvre, but she allowed her lover to fight a duel on her behalf for the sake of the magnificent publicity.*

SILKEN LADY

Her pale glamour of face lit the eye with wonder

by LESLIE BONNET

HSU SIEN began this strange story. It happened when he walked one day back towards the city of Hanchow along the road from the west. In the spring sunshine the dust of traffic rose in a white cloud into the sparkling air. The files of porters, bent under their laden carrying poles, wound heavily towards the West Gate. On either side of the raised roadway the brilliant green of young rice startled the eye. Through this accustomed press of men and goods and merchandise Hsu Sien made his nimble way.

He was short, dark of complexion, round of face; a poor scholar in a good humour based upon no valid reasons. He wore a blue gown and the skull cap with the button of the scholar upon it.

He stopped by the side of a small watercourse, where a ragged man entertained the curious with the antics of a beautiful white snake that he had captured. Hsu watched the diverting sight for a short time, and then, with the impulsiveness of youth and the bravado of poverty, he bought the tormented white snake and set it free.

The snake, with a quick, effortless twitch, slid through the dusty herbage and was gone. Hsu, smiling hard at the surprised sightseers to conceal the feeling that he had made himself ridiculous, pursued his way. There the matter might have rested, foolish impulse, embarrassed youth, grateful snake.

How could Hsu Sien have guessed that the white snake which he had so light-heartedly rescued was at that time in the last stages of a long adherence to the strict path of moral rectitude? But this indeed was so. And in the animal kingdom at least, in those far-off days, moral rectitude brought rewards. And so, quite soon after this happy liberation, the snake was rewarded by the Emperor of Heaven for her virtues. She was permitted to go down to earth in the shape of a lovely lady.

On her way to earth, after this satisfactory interview, she met another of her kind on a similar errand. This one had been a blue snake, and, as a prize for a shorter period of moral rectitude in a lesser degree, she was being sent to earth in the shape of a comely servant girl.

What could be more natural than that the White Snake Lady and the Blue Snake Maid should decide to venture into this strange human world in company. And it must be imagined that, before they took one more step, it was necessary to choose human names for themselves. What name a maidservant might pick for herself is of no matter. But the lady chose to be called Rippling Sleeves, because of the pleasing movements of the long silken sleeves of her white gown.

The next decision was just as natural. Rippling Sleeves chose at once to seek the city of Hanchow and the good young Hsu Sien who had shown her such kindness. Nor was it long before the White Snake Lady was married to the poor scholar, and her pretty maid busied herself about the poor apartment in which they dwelt.

If Hsu could be kind to a snake, imagine with what enthusiasm he would be able to cherish such a wife as this. For the beauty of Rippling Sleeves was of no ordinary kind. She had a pale glamour of face that lit the eye with wonder. Her cheeks glowed as if a white flame shone through delicate silk. She was taller than most, with a sinuous grace of movement that promised delight.

Fluttering through the apartment on tiny feet, long slanting eyes looking to Hsu for encouragement or correction, she was the image of felicity. Nor were her virtues confined to her looks. Patient, industrious, modest and careful of money, she seemed as good as she was beautiful.

Under the stimulus of this new domestic regime Hsu very soon began to prosper and, sustained in all his endeavours by his wife and her maid, he fast became sought after, patronized, and flattered with large fees.

The little family were then able to move to a modest but well-appointed house in the Street of the Shoemakers. And if there was a happy husband, it was Hsu. And if there was a good wife, it was his. And what need is there to tell more of that?

But then there came the time when Hsu must go to the temple of the Golden Mountain outside the city to arrange some relief for the souls of his ancestors. And accordingly on a day in late summer, when the morning air was still cold, Hsu Sien and Rippling Sleeves and the maid left the Street of the Shoemakers and made their way, through the jostle of traffic at the East Gate, to where the temple rose in bright terraces on a great green hill.

The morning was part gone when they were come there, but their approaching was known. They went to the hall where the priests were chanting and they bowed their heads. The cymbals and the drums sounded about them. And the priests called loudly upon the King of Heaven.

And one priest who chanted more loudly than any turned towards the suppliants just as Rippling Sleeves raised her glimmering face from where she bowed beside her husband. And the priest was so amazed at the beauty of the lady that his mouth remained fixed open. And the bell that he held ringing in his hand dropped with a clatter upon the stones.

The noise was scarcely noticed amid the pleasing din and Fa-hai (for that was the priest's name) resumed his loud chanting. But he could not forbear glancing often towards the white lady, for a great lust had entered into him. And he shivered as he chanted, and the bell trembled in his hand.

When the ceremony was concluded, Hsu Sien and his wife and the Blue Snake maid went back to the city to the happy house in the Street of the Shoemakers. Nor did Hsu or his wife have any suspicion of the wicked passion of the false priest. But the maid knew. Less severely schooled in moral rectitude than her mistress, she had been able to discern the cause of the priest's agitation.

It would be happy to relate that the priest repented of his base purpose; but, as it is said, repentance comes when passion is spent. And Fa-hai, panting for plunder, lost no time in insinuating himself into friendship with the unsuspecting Hsu. The priest, with grave features, with hollow voice and with burning eye became a frequent visitor to the house in the Street of the Shoemakers.

It would not be profitable, nor would it redound to the credit of his high order, if this humble person were to describe the wiles that this man employed to attain his desires, the ways he used to place himself in the lady's path, the solemn face, the loud cough, the significant nod; all of these devices were wasted. The priest burned in vain like a paper prayer of dubious origin.

To the maidservant these signals were plain enough and, because she was of a lower order of rectitude, they caused her some disturbance. And although in strict justice a degree of beauty less than that of her mistress had been bestowed upon her, yet such beauty as she had was sufficient for the eager priest. Indeed in the state of mind to which his wickedness had brought him it was more than enough.

Horrid were the frolics that passed between the twain in the rough chamber where they met in secret. Let nothing be said of the priest, with distorted face, disguised as a merchant, of the avid maidservant heavily cloaked; of the pitiful lewd play of base persons. The saucy words and the hot answers did but conceal the despair of cheated people. For in their greedy pleasures both found misery.

The maidservant, unmindful of her position, instead of feeling

gratitude for attentions, resented the priest's contempt. And Fa-hai, not finding what he had sought, grew more exacting and less polite. And always he questioned the sullen maid and sought to injure the Lady Rippling Sleeves.

So matters stood. The priest remained friendly with Hsu, consoled himself savagely with the maid and, in his heart, cursed the mistress.

Then the time came when the hard leaves of the gwe-hwa tree clattered along the streets and the cicadas no longer sang in the willows by the West Lake. And Rippling Sleeves knew that she was to bear Hsu a son. There was great happiness, then, in the little household in the Street of the Shoemakers. Hsu busied himself still more with lucrative matters and the little maid pattered more busily about her tasks, while Rippling Sleeves sat and made fine embroidery and smiled at secret enjoyments.

At such a time came Fa-hai again. He drew Hsu Sien privily apart and told him that he knew by his magic arts that Hsu Sien's wife was in truth a snake.

Whether this knowledge came to the wicked priest through magic arts, or through simpler means, it is easy to decide. Not only was his story true : but Hsu Sien believed it.

It is not wise to imagine the discomfort of mind of a man who suddenly understands that his wife is in truth a snake. Hsu Sien, from that moment, could view Rippling Sleeves only with the gravest loathing. He, however, gave no immediate sign of the priest's disclosure ; but after a night of strict torment he fled next morning without a word.

It was the maid who discovered that he had sought refuge at the Golden Mountain Temple. When she learned this, the Lady Rippling Sleeves determined at once to go to him.

Through the wind-whipped streets and out on to the hard highway the lady and the maid journeyed to the Temple ; but there they found no sign or news of the unhappy Hsu Sien.

Returning towards the city in great sorrow, Rippling Sleeves suddenly saw one ahead of them in the crowd who ran as if to avoid them. It was Hsu. Her lily feet, ill-suited to running, pressed after him as fast as her condition would allow ; but the maid, having been allowed no bound feet because of her lower status, was able to chase after the husband and detain him.

Breathless and distraught, Hsu gazed at his wife with horror as, when she came up to him, she humbly asked in what particular she had displeased him. He dared not tell her. He did not know what fairy means she might have to harm or bind him. It occurred to him that amiability would prove his best defence, and he there-

fore allowed himself to be appeased, explained his strange conduct as due to an evil spirit, and took Rippling Sleeves very lovingly home.

There was nothing effective he could do to her until his son was born. Whatever else might happen, the next generation must be assured. So quiet and an appearance of happiness descended again upon the home of Hsu Sien and the pale lady.

But Hsu continued privately to visit the priest Fa-hai to consult with him and to plan.

In the appointed month a man child was born and Rippling Sleeves had fulfilled her duty to the anxious Hsu. The boy had every appearance of having been born under fortunate auspices and Hsu could not too often go to where he lay in the arms of his smiling mother.

And so, when a propitious day was come Hsu took a small bell, which the priest had blessed with spells, and flung it tinkling at the feet of Rippling Sleeves. As the priest had predicted, this rite immediately changed the lady back into a white snake again.

Hsu gazed at it with interest, but without loathing. In its proper form what harm was there in a white snake? Then Hsu took his broad knife and went to seek the maid to kill her so that there might be no embarrassment. But he could not find her.

She was not seen again that day or on any other day.

Hsu appointed women to care for his son and began the life of gainful intellectual industry which was to be his. But he had to kill the white snake. It would not leave the baby's cot.

And in this wise went the White Snake Lady back again to the Emperor of Heaven.

But what happened to the maid is hard to tell. There was often, people said, a blue snake about the apartment of the haggard priest Fa-hai, and sometimes the hiss of woman's laughter from within.

* * *

WITHOUT CEREMONY

A French Under-secretary was invited to the silver wedding anniversary of a distinguished English bishop.

"Silver wedding?" he asked the bishop's nephew. "It is a ceremony which I do not quite grasp."

"My aunt and uncle," was the reply, "have lived together for twenty-five long years without being separated a single day."

"Ah!" said the Frenchman. "And now he marry her? Magnifique!"

NOT MADE IN HEAVEN

It is commonly a weak man who marries for love

DR. JOHNSON

My father . . . often related to me how, when just down from Christ Church, he had arrived to stay in a famous country house for a ball. The two daughters of his hostess would be great heiresses; but unfortunately, though he liked them, and they, so he claimed, entertained feelings deeper than friendship for him, yet my father disapproved of both the young ladies: for he considered that they were overfond of pleasure, and feared, moreover, that they might like to spend money too freely. Another motive influenced him even more profoundly. He held very strict views on eugenics, and their noses too nearly resembled his own in shape (so he had told me), and this, if he had married either of them, might have tended to accentuate the aquiline profiles of his offspring, and so have deprived his children of the classical mould of feature for which he hoped, and which indeed he was determined to secure for them.

SIR OSBERT SITWELL, *Making a Bolt for It*

Needs Must!

Ever a man, alas, would mix,
Ever a man, heigh-ho, must woo;
So he's left in the world-old fix,
Thus is furthered the sale of rue . . .

DOROTHY PARKER

This Courting . . .

March 28, 1765.—In the afternoon rode over to Chiddingly, to pay my charmer, or intended wife, or sweetheart or whatever other name may be more proper, a visit at her father's where I drank tea, in company with their family and Miss Ann Thatcher. I supped there on some rasures of bacon. It being an excessive wet and windy night I had the opportunity, sure I should say the pleasure, or perhaps some might say the unspeakable happiness, to sit up with Molly Hicks, or my charmer, all night. I came home at forty minutes past five in the morning—I must not say fatigued; no, no, that could not be; it could be only a little sleepy for want of rest . . .

Good Fryday, 1765.—In the even met with Molly Hicks, by appointment, and walked home with her, where I staid with her, the weather being excessive bad, till past five in the morning . . .
Saturday, April 7, 1765.—In the even very dull and sleepy; this courting does not well agree with my constitution, and perhaps it may be only taking pains to create more pain.
Wednesday, July 3, 1765.— . . . I have been so embarrassed with a multiplicity of business, that I was not able to continue my journal, being, on the 19th day of June, married, at our church, to Mary Hicks, servant to Luke Spence, Esq., of South Malling, by the Rev. Mr. Porter; and for about fourteen days was very ill with a tertian ague . . .

THOMAS TURNER *of East Hoathly, Diary*

Special Licence

He begged, for gude-sake! I wad be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him with sorrow:
So e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
I think I maun wed him—tomorrow, tomorrow,
I think I maun wed him tomorrow.

ROBERT BURNS

Mariage de Convenance

The average Englishman is gregarious. There is a practical reason for this, in that it is the only way he has discovered for young men and girls to meet and get to know one another. Surrounded by his fellows in the Dramatic Society, the Tennis or Golf Club, he gradually plucks up courage and dares to exchange a word or two with a girl. Perhaps one of them has cast an eye on him and, with the approval of her parents, decided that he would make a good husband, who would provide her with a comfortable home and children. On his side, the young man, well aware that some day he will have to settle down in a home of his own and have a family, may decide that the girl suits him and will then ask her out.

"He is courting," his friends will remark.

They start going for walks nearly every evening, hand in hand, barely exchanging a word, now and then stopping for a furtive kiss. The length of this phase varies. At some unexpected moment, in the middle of a set of tennis, while having a pint in a pub, he will suddenly turn to her:

"We seem to get on all right. What about getting married?"

She replies: "Let's," and they talk of other things.

ADALBERT DE SEGONZAC, *Love Among the English*

Adam's Eden

Such was that happy garden-state,
While man there walked without a mate . . .
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there :
Two paradises 'twere in one,
To live in paradise alone . . .

ANDREW MARVELL

Escape Me Never

" Well. I guess you got a girl, now, ain't you, Bob ? . . . An' she won't let you go now she's got you. You're *my* Bob now, ain't you ? "

" Yes, Jenny." He was so happy. Her Bob. His Jenny. His ! His living Jenny in his arms ! The perils of the future were obliterated by her warm consoling presence and reality. He would love her for ever.

" Oh, I'm so lucky and happy ! " he said.

" Well, I hope you will be," she said. " 'Cos I won't let you go. Not never."

A long silence followed. She would never let him go. He believed her. He gloried in his sentence. He took stock of his delicious and inescapable possession. Not only the real natural fair hair—not only the real natural blue eyes—but the mouth, and the hands, and the sweet limbs, and all the fabrics and silks containing them and made magic by them. Her shoes. Her stockings. The bangle on her wrist. Every little appurtenance. A complete and golden girl ! His girl. She would never let him go. Oh, indeed, his doom was sweet . . .

All at once she drew away from him and sat up . . . . Her skirt fell above her knees, and one garter, ornate and trim, was revealed. Another accessory ! Another little article, as it were, which he had forgotten to include in the heavenly inventory ! Where would it all stop ?

PATRICK HAMILTON, *The Midnight Bell*

Up The Garden

LUCENTIO : *Hearest thou, Biondello?*
BIONDELLO : *I cannot tarry : I knew a wench married in an afternoon as she went to the garden for parsley to stuff a rabbit ; and so may you, sir ; and so, adieu, sir.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *The Taming of the Shrew*

CAT AND MOUSE

She had invented a little game to play with her husband

by KERMIT ROLLAND

THE death of Mrs. Alma Carmody occurred on Friday, the twenty-second of October, at approximately eight o'clock in the evening in the kitchen of a small flat in Stover Street. She had just prepared her husband's supper and at the moment of death was brewing a pot of catnip tea. When she fell to the floor the pot was smashed and the tea was spilt over the linoleum. Her body was found by her husband Albert when he came home from work.

On the surface Mrs. Carmody's death was a commonplace tragedy, made interesting only by the fact that Albert Carmody usually came home for supper at six o'clock, not eight. But this fact alone was scarcely significant enough to prompt a police inquiry.

The circumstances pertinent to Mrs. Carmody's passing had been assembled on the previous evening. The initial circumstance was a quarrel between husband and wife. The quarrel concerned a cat.

Mr. Carmody was a small man, thin, rather shabby; and considerably younger than his wife, who was forty-four at the time of her death. For several years he had been employed by the Department of City Parks as an assistant keeper in the public zoo. He worked in the lion house.

His duties were light because the city was not rich in lions. There were only two : King Congo, a savage beast who could snap the rib-bone of a horse with a single crunch of his great jaws, and Old Ernest, equally terrifying in appearance but quite harmless because he was toothless. There had been talk around the zoo that Old Ernest would shortly be destroyed because the public expected a lion to have teeth.

Mr. Carmody's work was finished at five-thirty each day when Bostitch, the head keeper, came around to see that the cages had been properly secured for the night. At these times he repeated a favourite joke as he tugged at the padlocks.

" Have to lock up right," he said. " Can't afford to have King Congo get loose and eat up one of the public—attendance is slim enough as it is." Mr. Carmody laughed dutifully.

The night before his wife's death, Mr. Carmody said good night

to the two lions and then set off as usual across the park for home. The Carmody flat in Stover Street lay just on the other side of the park; it had been taken because of its convenience for Mr. Carmody's work. The walk through the deserted, twilit park took half an hour. At six o'clock Alma Carmody unlocked the hall door in response to her husband's knock. After exchanging a perfunctory greeting, husband and wife sat down to supper in the kitchen.

For fifteen years Thursday night had been meat-loaf night. Mrs. Carmody was excessively fond of this dish and ate a great plateful. Mr. Carmody did not care for it. Once he had asked his wife to serve something else on Thursdays, but she had flown into such a rage that he had never dared mention it again.

With the rather tallowy supper was served a herb tea made from catnip leaves. This was another of Mr. Carmody's grievances. He had suggested to his wife several times that the use of catnip should be confined to animals. Showing a familiarity with the subject, he explained to her that catnip, in its dried form, was often administered to house cats as a tonic and that catnip, in the form of an essence, was often used by big game hunters to lure tigers, lions, panthers and other jungle cats within the range of rifles or nets. But catnip was not, he insisted with some heat, a proper supper-time beverage for a man who had spent a hard day in a zoo.

Mrs. Carmody's comment was brief. "You'll drink it and like it!" she said. She added, "You know it's done my heart a real lot of good."

Now it was true that Mrs. Carmody suffered from a mild heart condition. It was her own fault, according to her husband. A doctor she visited a number of years ago told her to go on a diet if she wanted to get well. This she had indignantly refused to do. Instead, she persistently aggravated her condition by two-handed gluttony three times a day and drank a large pot of catnip tea at each meal to ease her conscience. The catnip had been recommended to her by a former neighbour as a remedy for her complaint.

Mr. Carmody had once remarked with a certain wistfulness that he would enjoy a cup of coffee with his supper. This had brought about a sharp exchange of words, in the course of which Mrs. Carmody made the curious declaration, "I'll die before I'll have the stuff in the house!"

After their supper, which was to be the last which Alma would enjoy on earth, they went into the parlour to occupy themselves separately until it should be time to go to bed. The flat contained three rooms: the kitchen; the small parlour with its brown, buckled wallpaper; and the bedroom, with a sagging double bed on which Mrs. Carmody slept alone because of her bulk, and a folding cot at the foot of her bed for her husband.

Mrs. Carmody sat in her rocking chair next to the small, sooty fireplace in the parlour and laid out a game of patience on top of a soiled, oilcloth hassock, balancing a cup of catnip tea in her lap.

On this evening, as on every other evening, Mr. Carmody went to a large table which stood in one corner of the room. On top of this table was spread the material for the hobby which had occupied his evenings for fifteen years. It was a miniature African landscape. In cunning and loving detail, with a bucket of sand, a sheet of painted cardboard and some bits of twigs and straws picked up in the park, on a credible scale (here the footprint of a mouse would pass for that of a jackal), he had succeeded in capturing for himself the look of Africa in his living-room.

As he gazed upon his handiwork, his nimble imagination quickly translated sand, twig, straw and cardboard into hollow and grove, hummock and rise. He saw the broad, gently-rolling sweep of the tawny veldt; the acacia trees clustered thirstily about a waterhole, and the green foothills rising to Kilimanjaro on the horizon. This was the small, private world into which Mr. Carmody escaped every evening between supper and bed. Here he unleashed an impatient spirit and watched it roam the land on strange safaris.

Tonight he pictured a lion by the waterhole, lured there by the imaginary catnip which he, Carmody the Hunter, had scattered on the game trail; a huge lion, more fierce than King Congo in the zoo, looking up at him with hungry yellow eyes.

"We've got mice!" Mrs. Carmody's voice from the rocker cut into her husband's reverie like a sharp tooth. "We've got mice," she repeated, peeking under a little pile of cards to locate a black queen. "I saw one today eating at your landscape."

Now Mrs. Carmody had been considering the mice for more than a week, although they had no more place in the dingy reality of Stover Street than the lion in the landscape. She had invented the mice.

When Alma met Mr. Carmody she had been a plump, pouting creature who entertained a fuzzy-headed notion that taking up life with a lion keeper would be a romantic, intrepid escapade. Marriage had revealed her lion keeper to be neither romantic nor intrepid, by her lights, but only solicitous, diligent and quietly good-natured, and this was something she had never forgiven him.

As an outlet for her frustration she had long ago invented a little game to play with her husband. The game consisted of laying small plots against his good nature until he was driven to make a protest, and then, quickly seizing the advantage, browbeating him until he was reduced to submissiveness, as an animal tamer baits a beast by

flicking a whip in its eyes and then, at the moment of the lunge, quickly thrusts the four legs of a kitchen chair in its face.

Lately, since the completion of his model landscape, Mr. Carmody had refused to respond to the whip. As a consequence, Mrs. Carmody had found her evenings growing very dull indeed. That was why she had been forced to invent the destructive mice, knowing that her husband lived in fear that some harm might come to his precious landscape.

Mr. Carmody greeted his wife's announcement about the mice in his landscape with controlled excitement. " I'll get some traps," he said. " First thing tomorrow. Curlee's has them." Curlee's was the local store where Mrs. Carmody bought the catnip for her heart condition.

Mrs. Carmody was very disappointed by her husband's reaction to the mice. She cast about for some way to continue the game. She said suddenly, " I think we should get a cat."

" Heavens, no ! " Mr. Carmody exclaimed. " I mean," he amended in a more moderate tone, " we've discussed having a pet in the house. I like pets, but you know yourself what a cat would do to my landscape. Scratching it up—digging in the sand. I'd rather put up with the mice. Besides, we've already discussed it."

" I've changed my mind," said Mrs. Carmody flatly. " I want a cat. Anyway, your landscape don't mean nothing to me." She resented her husband's hobby because he seemed to find in it the romantic adventure she felt she had been cheated of by her marriage to him.

" But you don't even like cats," Mr. Carmody declared. " You don't like any animals. You said they frighten you. You don't even want me to talk about my work in the zoo." He had tried to tell her about Bostitch's plan to have Old Ernest removed because of his dental condition.

Mrs. Carmody was delighted with the progress of her game. She would, she decided, permit her husband one more protest before forcing him to knuckle under.

" I've changed my mind," she persisted. " I want a cat. If you don't bring me one—*by tomorrow night*—you'll never have a moment's peace as long as you live."

Mr. Carmody groaned like a man under a lash. Then, slowly, he gathered his scattered resolve. " I won't do it ! " he shouted at his wife. " I'm damned if I'll bring you a cat ! "

" Don't you shout at me ! " Mrs. Carmody shrieked at him. " Do you want to upset my heart ? " She could not understand it. She couldn't remember her husband ever before daring to defy her in this manner. Her little game, she realized, had grown out of all proportion to her intention : what had arisen instead was a contest

for the control of the whole household. Mrs. Carmody was growing alarmed.

Mr. Carmody was still excited. " You've shoved me around long enough ! " he shouted again. " No cat ! " he made the cry sound like a rally at a barricade.

Mrs. Carmody got up abruptly from her chair. The cup of tea slid from her lap and crashed on the hearth. The tea spluttered into the fireplace and made the coals hiss. She trembled with a genuine rage. " You'll be sorry ! " she screamed at her husband. Then she stamped into the bedroom and slammed the door.

An hour later Mr. Carmody also went to bed, first making a careful inspection of his landscape for mouse tracks. For a long time he lay on his folding cot and stared at the ceiling. He strained his ears for the sounds of mice but he could hear nothing except his wife's heavy breathing on the double bed next to him.

The idea of mice at work in the landscape distressed him so much that he turned his mind to his job at the zoo for relief. He thought about the lions, the fierce King Congo and the gentle Ernest, pacing their dark cages all night long while the people of the city, careless that lions walked in their midst, slumbered in their beds. *Pad-pad*, thought Mr. Carmody. *Pad-pad.*

It was impossible, he told himself, but the soft fall of the cushioned paws sounded so plainly to him that the big cats might have been treading the floor of the very bedroom. In a little while he fell asleep.

Alma Carmody rested quietly on her sagging mattress waiting for her husband to fall asleep. She was enraged with him for his firm stand against her. While she waited she planned how she might punish him for his obstinacy. The mice, she decided finally ; she would use the mice again.

At the first sound of a snore from the cot at the foot of her bed she got up and, with a stealth surprising in one so large, she crept on broad, bare feet into the shadowy living-room. The room was dark save for the small coal fire in the grate. Marked by dim highlights, she moved purposefully to the African landscape.

For an instant her hands hovered over the table. Then methodically she began to pluck the veldt. A few moments later she made her way to the fireplace and carelessly scattered a double handful of twigs and straws on the grate. A yellow blaze rose from the grate as she crept back to bed.

Mr. Carmody was the first to awaken the next morning. The day was Friday, the twenty-second of October.

As was his custom, he stood for a moment in the bedroom door-

way immediately upon rising and looked across the living-room at his landscape. What he saw this morning sent him hurrying to the table. What he found there was a scene of destruction.

The hand of blight had struck the verdant land during the hours of darkness. The veldt was all but barren of grass. The little grove of acacia trees no longer fringed the waterhole. The smooth hummocks were gouged and furrowed as though a monster boar had rutted through them. The cardboard mountains were rent and ripped.

" *The mice !* " exclaimed Mr. Carmody in a hoarse whisper.

In the bedroom Mrs. Carmody yawned herself awake. She called lazily to her husband. " I'm staying in bed a while—my heart ain't too good today. Bring me some tea before you make your breakfast."

The voice snapped Mr. Carmody out of his dazed appraisal of his blasted land.

Mechanically he began to dress himself in his dark green, zoo department uniform. Next he went into the kitchen and lighted the gas under the kettle for his wife's tea. Then he went to the fireplace in the living-room and stirred up the ashes in the grate preparatory to building up a fire.

It was while he was occupied with the poker that he discovered, scattered about the grate, a number of half-burned fragments of twigs and straws.

The meaning of the charred bits was clear to him at once. *There were no mice*, he thought. *Alma destroyed the landscape !*

Mr. Carmody's first impulse was to rush into the bedroom and throttle her where she lay. But he rejected this course for he knew his wife's strength was superior to his own. He must, he decided, hold himself in control until he could find a more conclusive way of dealing with her. Grim-faced and thoughtful, he returned to his chores.

First he carefully swept up the bits of twigs and straw and buried them beneath the ashes in the coal bucket. It would be to his advantage, he thought, if his wife did not learn too soon that he had discovered evidence of her deed. Then he went into the kitchen and brewed a pot of tea, his mind busy with the idea of revenge. He put the pot of tea and a cup and saucer on to a tray and carried the tray into the bedroom. Mrs. Carmody was sitting propped up with pillows. Her face was puffy with sleep.

" I heard them again last night," she said cheerily as her husband entered the room. " The mice."

Mr. Carmody placed the tray on a chair beside the bed. " I saw signs of them this morning," he said quietly.

" The tea smells good," said Alma as she reached over to fill her

cup. "There's nothing like a good, hot cup of catnip tea in the morning."

The tea, thought Mr. Carmody. The catnip tea! An idea for revenge began to shape itself in his mind. The tea, of course!

"You were right about the cat," he said suddenly. "We *should* have a cat. I'll bring you one tonight."

"I knew you'd come round to my way of thinking," said Mrs. Carmody in a smug voice.

Mr. Carmody put on his peaked zoo department cap. "I'll be late getting home tonight," he said. "Not till after dark. Say about eight."

"I'll have some supper for you." Mrs. Carmody reached over to refill her cup. "We're having cold meat loaf. You didn't eat hardly none of it last night."

"And tea?" Mr. Carmody asked gently.

"Of course."

Mr. Carmody paused in the doorway on his way out and turned to look back at his wife. "That'll be nice," he said with a thin smile.

Ordinarily Mr. Carmody enjoyed the half-hour walk to work through the park. During these walks his imagination found space to stretch itself. On some days each lilac bush concealed for him a lurking shape, four-footed and tawny, and every sycamore and elm was populous with the fur-bearing creatures of his fancy. Boldly he led an imaginary safari through a tropical wilderness of fang and claw, giving courage by his example to the timid gun bearers who straggled behind.

But this morning Mr. Carmody saw only seedy shrubbery and bare-limbed trees on the branches of which hopped a number of dingy city sparrows. He admitted sadly that there wasn't a lion in sight. His wife, he realized, had destroyed more than his model landscape while he slept; she had also destroyed all illusion for him.

The foolish landscape, thought Mr. Carmody; foolish cardboard Kilimanjaro. This morning he knew all mountains were made of hard, imperishable stone.

During the Friday afternoon Head Keeper Bostitch came bumbling into Mr. Carmody's lion house.

"Well," said Bostitch, "the curator finally came through. Knew he'd see it my way. 'Think of the public,' I told him. He did, Carmody, and right off he gave me the authorization. Here it is." He exhibited a slip of white paper.

Mr. Carmody had known that it must come some day. "It's inevitable," he had said to his wife. But now that the time had

arrived he felt in no way prepared to accept the decision with the equanimity Bostitch was displaying.

He read the slip of paper. It was an order from the curator directing Head Keeper Bostitch and his staff, Mr. Carmody, to destroy, in a humane manner, one African lion, male, named Old Ernest.

" Sa-a-ay," exclaimed Bostitch, " don't take it so hard. You're white as a sheet. It's only an old lion with no teeth. Think of the public, Carmody." He tucked the slip of paper into his pocket.

" Take care of things," he directed. " I won't be around till morning. Be sure to lock up well tonight. Think of the public." And he hurried importantly out of the lion house.

Mr. Carmody put down the broom on which he had been leaning and walked sadly to the cages. He was very fond of lions and he hated to have Old Ernest taken away from him.

Old Ernest, whose ferocious appearance belied his toothless condition, padded to the front of the cage at Mr. Carmody's left. At Mr. Carmody's right, King Congo raised his head from his paws and sniffed the carefully filtered air of the lion house.

Mr. Carmody looked thoughtfully from one great lion to the other as though he were trying to make up his mind about something.

" It's a shame," he said aloud, " that you two never get out-of-doors. It's a shame to have to walk all day and all night on the hard, concrete floor, when on the other side of your bars the earth is still soft with summer. You would like the park. We could walk together—at least one of you."

Mrs. Carmody lay in bed until ten o'clock when hunger finally drove her into the kitchen. Her heart seemed more quiet to her now and she made herself a large breakfast of eggs and toast with a slice of cold meat loaf on the side. On her way into the kitchen she stopped to look at the remains of her husband's landscape. It was very odd, she thought, that he hadn't been more upset about it.

During the afternoon she took a bottle of furniture polish and a flannel cloth from the shelf under the kitchen sink and rubbed and buffed her rocking chair which stood by the fireplace in the living-room. The polishing done, she went to her husband's table and picked out the few straws remaining in the landscape. Then she shoved the table far back into the corner.

By seven o'clock it had started to grow dark in the shabby rooms and she turned on the light in the kitchen as she set about preparing supper. Mr. Carmody had said he would be late getting home—he probably had to go to one of the pet shops in the town to pick up a cat, she told herself. She worked without haste among her pots and pans, pausing now and again to nibble at the food she was preparing.

Mrs. Carmody looked at the clock on the wall. Eight o'clock. Surely, she thought, her husband would be along at any moment now. It had grown very dark outside and an evening chill had begun to work its way into the dingy rooms. She set the table in the kitchen and put the remains of the meat loaf into the oven to heat. Then she took down from its special place on the shelf her porcelain teapot.

Into the teapot she dropped five pinches of dried catnip leaves. Over the leaves she poured boiling water from the kettle on the stove. The pungent, faintly medicinal aroma of steeping catnip arose to fill the kitchen.

At that moment Mrs. Carmody heard a knock on the hall door which led off the living-room. That would be her husband, she knew. He always made a special little knock before coming in so as not to frighten her. The knock was repeated.

" Albert ? " she called out. She remained in the kitchen out of sight of the hall door, still holding the teapot in her hand.

From the outside hallway came a muffled, " It's me."

" Did you bring me a cat ? " she shouted. There followed a moment of silence, broken only by an odd, scrambling sound in the outside passage. " What you doing out there, Albert ? I asked did you bring me a cat ? "

Mrs. Carmody heard the hall door slowly open and from the dark living-room she heard her husband say, " I brought you a cat."

" Kitty, kitty, kitty—" Mrs. Carmody began.

The sentence went unfinished. A long, tawny shape with savage yellow eyes bounded into the kitchen with a deep roar.

Mr. Carmody remained standing in the hall until he heard the roar, the simultaneous shriek of terror, the crash of a teapot and the thump of a heavy body striking the kitchen floor. Then he began to untangle a new-looking leather collar and steel chain which he held in his hands.

" Kitty," he called softly. " Here, kitty." Then, more sternly, " Ernest ! Come here, Ernest ! "

Old Ernest padded reluctantly out of the kitchen and into the hall. His tongue lolled from his toothless mouth and his muzzle was damp with the catnip tea he couldn't resist.

" I'm sorry," said Mr. Carmody as he fastened the collar round the old lion's neck, " but we have to go back now. We'll have a little run in the park on the way."

A week later, Albert Carmody walked with a springy step into Curlee's store. He made his way purposefully to the stationery department in the rear.

"A sheet of cardboard," he smiled at the attractive young woman who waited on him, "and a box of paints."

He paid for his purchases and tucked his package carefully under his arm. On his way out of the store he stopped at the lunch bar where he perched himself on one of the high stools.

"A cup of coffee," he said to the beautiful girl behind the counter. "A large cup."

* * *

HEADLINES

My grandfather, who was 87 last March, has been converted to nudism. All day long he sits in the greenhouse without a stitch on, except his hat. When I ask him what he wants with a hat if he is a nudist, he hits out at me with his stick and shouts: "Because I'm bald . . ."

From a letter in the Daily Mail, quoted in This England

And as the fashions bee rare and straunge, so is the stuffe whereof their hattes be made divers also: for some are of silke, some of velvet, some of taffatie, some of sarcenet, some of wooll, and, whiche is more curious, some of a certaine kinde of fine haire; these they call bever hattes, of xx. xxx. or xl. shillinges price, fetched from beyonde the seas, from whence a greate sorte of other vanities doe come besides.

PHILIP STUBBES, *The Anatomie of Abuses*

When summer came Thadée and I went to Christiana with Lugné Poë. It was a town of such honesty that it possessed no prison, due to the lack of thieves and criminals to put under lock and key. In this sinless city we at once became aware that Ibsen was king.

We met him in the best hotel, draped in an ample frock-coat, his old lion's head crowned by a huge top hat. As soon as he had sat down he placed his headgear exactly in front of him on its side on the table and began to arrange to a nicety his mane and carefully to fluff out his side-whiskers. This intrigued me very much, because as he did so he stared fixedly into his hat. Soon the key to the enigma was revealed to me: there was a small looking-glass fixed into the bottom of the master's hat.

MISIA SERT, *Two or Three Muses*

WINNING SEQUENCE

"We must go on deceiving him—we must be wicked," said Miss Roberta

by MARGERY SHARP

UP to the ages of sixty-one and sixty-three the Misses Pye had never told an untruth. Since their father had been a clergyman and their mother a deaconess, this was only right and natural; but it made their one lapse (which occurred on the first Saturday in September) all the harder to excuse. Even so, they did not actually *tell* the lie: the sin was a tacit one; and it is only fair to add that they were neither of them quite themselves at the time.

Miss Pye and Miss Roberta Pye lived on the top storey of No. 7, Portaferry Road, Paddington. The thoroughfare was not a prepossessing one, but they had an affection for it because it lay in the heart of their father's old parish; and it was also very cheap.

No. 7 was not prepossessing either, until one reached the top floor; and then one entered a domain as exquisitely neat, as meticulously ordered, as a lady's work-box. It was probably the tidiest place in London, and it was dusted three times a day. What with dusting, cooking, visiting the sick and doing embroidery for bazaars, the Misses Pye led full and happy lives; and they had in addition two never-failing sources of pleasurable pride.

These were a nephew in the Air Force, and a miniature of their great-great-grandmother; nor was it easy to say which gave them more satisfaction. The nephew Henry was now at Cranwell and well on the way to earning a commission; the heirloom miniature, besides being an authentic proof of their breeding, was also a work of art. It was reputed to be by Cosway, and a Mr. Faraday, a friend of the Vicar's, had once offered fifty pounds for it.

The two ladies naturally refused, and always talked of the offer as a gross breach of taste; but in secret they were extremely pleased by it. It was not everyone in Portaferry Road—or indeed, in Paddington—who had fifty pounds lying idle on the mantelpiece . . .

"We're a couple of sentimental old fools!" said Miss Pye every Saturday; for it was on Saturdays that the miniature was taken from its case and set upright against a little easel to grace the mantelpiece during the week-end.

Saturday was also the day on which their nephew sometimes came to tea, so Miss Roberta always bought a cake as well as buns; and if he didn't arrive they ate the cake on Sunday (when it was a little stale and went further), and thus had a treat for the week-end all the same. Neither Miss Pye nor Miss Roberta had ever heard of the Technique of Living, but they knew a good deal about it nevertheless.

On the first Saturday in September, however, the cake was bought in full confidence, for Henry was definitely expected; and it was therefore all the more upsetting when the one o'clock post brought a letter bearing an Air Force badge.

"It's to say he can't come!" cried Miss Roberta.

Miss Pye slit the envelope carefully (one of the parish Wolf Cubs collected crests) and drew out a short note. It consisted of no more than half a page, but she was so long reading it that her sister grew impatient.

"What does he say, dear? Why isn't he coming?"

"He is coming," answered Miss Pye slowly. "He's coming to supper."

"To supper! And we've only sardines! What time will he be here?"

"You'd better see it yourself," said Miss Pye, still in that odd slow voice. Miss Roberta glanced once at her sister's face, then took the letter and read.

Henry was very sorry to trouble them, but could they lend him fifty pounds? And could they let him have it that night, as otherwise, he was afraid, it would mean leaving Cranwell . . .

"Fifty pounds!" cried Miss Roberta, aghast. "Whatever can he want it for?"

"He doesn't say." Miss Pye moistened her lips. "He—he must be ashamed to."

There was a short, horrified silence. Then—

"Whatever it is," said Miss Roberta firmly, "we've got to get it for him."

"Of course," said Miss Pye.

Their eyes flew to the mantelpiece. From her little easel the lady of the miniature smiled heartlessly back. Never before had she looked so charming, so debonair. No one could wonder that Mr. Faraday (man of wealth as he was) should be prepared to give so vast a sum for her.

"You've still got that address, dear?" said Miss Roberta at last.

"The Gables, Southholt Green. But he talked about moving, because they'd built a race-course there. He mayn't even be in England."

"We must go and see," said Miss Roberta sternly. "And if he *has* moved, we must go to—to a pawnbroker's. After all, it always was to be Henry's, wasn't it?"

In silence they made their preparations. To keep their strength up they boiled and ate two eggs. Then they put on their best coats, and the hats bought only two years ago, and Miss Roberta wore her beaver neck-tie.

They were not going to embarrass Mr. Faraday by any poverty-stricken looks. They would just explain that they were—well, tired of their miniature, and had decided to give him the first refusal. Miss Pye actually rehearsed the sentences as she put the ivory into its case and wrapped the case in a clean handkerchief. The whole packet took up no more room in her bag than the box of lozenges she carried for her cough.

"Suppose," said Miss Roberta suddenly, "he comes before we get back?"

"He has his key, dear."

"But he must be very worried. Mightn't we leave a message, just to say that it's all right?"

Miss Pye frowned.

"Whatever he's done, Roberta, we can't treat it as a—a peccadillo. Henry must be made to feel. Leave a message if you like, but only saying that we shall be back. And make it stern."

So Miss Roberta, after a moment's thought, got out the newly-bought cake and a sheet of paper, and on the paper wrote simply: *If we're late, dear, cut yourself a slice.*

It seemed to both of them that that was quite stern enough.

Southholt Green is a pleasant outer suburb most easily reached by train from Marylebone Station; and on that fine Saturday afternoon the two ladies were quite struck to observe how many other people were going there as well. There was even a special booking-window, where they had to stand in a queue, and where half a dozen gentlemen took tickets before Miss Pye moved up to the grill.

"I want two third-class returns to Southholt Green—"

"Race train?" snapped the clerk.

"Certainly not," corrected Miss Pye. "I want two third-class—"

"If you go on the race train, you can get returns for one-and-three."

The sisters looked at each other. It meant a saving of ninepence on each ticket.

"But we are not," explained Miss Pye, "*going* to the races. If it doesn't matter—"

"If you don't make up your minds," observed a gentleman behind, "we'll none of us be going . . ."

In some confusion Miss Pye put down her half-crown and hurried Miss Roberta off. They had no difficulty in finding the train, but spent so long looking for a Ladies Only compartment that the guard was at last forced to thrust them into a smoker.

It already contained six gentlemen (four with cigars) and one young lady who, like her cigarless companions, smoked cigarette after cigarette; and in this wholly foreign atmosphere—their two persons squeezed into the space designed for one—their lungs filled with unaccustomed and offensive odours—the Misses Pye passed the next half-hour. They shut their eyes and endured. It is possible that they prayed. And on alighting at Southholt Green they felt and looked so remarkably shaky that the last touting taxi-man at once marked them down.

"Come on, ladies!" he cried encouragingly. "A bob all the way, and save you twenty minutes!"

Miss Pye looked at the vehicle with longing.

"Shall we, Roberta?"

"A shilling seems very reasonable," said Miss Roberta. "Only how does he know how far we want to go?"

"If he says a shilling, he must take a shilling; that's the Law," said Miss Pye, and, with her sister following, stepped recklessly into the cab.

It was at this point in their journey that they definitely took the wrong turning.

The taxi, as has been said, was the last on the station rank, and just as Miss Pye was about to give the address a portly gentleman sprang up as from the ground and placed his foot upon the step. At the same moment the door on the other side opened and a second gentleman, of equal girth, thrust himself unceremoniously inside.

"Now, ladies," cried the first urgently, "you've got the last cab, we're in a hurry, what d'you say to letting us two share it, and getting a free ride yourselves?"

The ladies said nothing. They were too startled. It seemed as though everyone they met was bent on giving them loud, peremptory advice; and as they had yielded in turn to the booking-clerk, to the guard, and to the taxi-man, so they now yielded to the gentlemen in a hurry. For before they could collect their wits their new mentors were established on the folding-seats, the driver had grinned and mounted, and the cab was in motion.

"It's like *Alice in Wonderland*," murmured Miss Roberta. "All the animals ordering one another about . . ."

The gentleman opposite nudged his companion.

"Alice!" he repeated. "There's an Alice in the three-thirty.

How's that for a tip?" And he winked at Miss Roberta in so very vulgar a way that she at once closed her eyes. So did Miss Pye. But they had to open them almost immediately, for a moment later the journey—a remarkably short one, even for a shilling—had come to an end. It had come to an end, in fact, outside the Southholt Race-course.

"Oh *dear*!" cried Miss Roberta despairingly.

"Didn't *you* give the address either?" wailed Miss Pye.

For the moment, indeed, their courage was quite out. Their heads and backs ached, and though they were actually in Southholt Green, Mr. Faraday seemed as remote as ever. And in fact he was remote, for they had heard him mention with thankfulness that his house was at least nowhere in the vicinity of the abhorrent race-course. It was far away over the Green, miles and miles away where no taxi on earth would ever take them for a shilling.

"Oh *dear*!" said Miss Roberta again.

The gentleman paying the fare—for he was faithful to his word—looked round. Of Mr. Faraday he naturally knew nothing: all that presented itself to his eye was a couple of distressed-looking old ladies staring dejectedly at a notice-board.

Neither Miss Pye nor Miss Roberta had even seen the thing, for their gaze was quite blank; but it so happened that the legend thereon might very well have accounted, to the casual observer, for their melancholy appearance. "Ladies, accompanied by Gentlemen," said the board, "Half Price."

With an impulse of pure benevolence the gentleman returned.

"Here," he said kindly, "you come in with us, and save half a dollar. How'll that do?"

Miss Pye drew herself up. But even as she did so—while the lightning flashed from her eye—an extraordinary thing happened.

"Thank you very much," said Miss Roberta. "I'm sure we're greatly obliged to you."

"Roberta, how could you?" demanded Miss Pye.

They were inside, their escorts had vanished: before them towered the backs of the stands, about them streamed hundreds of purposeful race-goers. Had they found themselves upon Mars, the Misses Pye could scarcely have been more at a loss.

"It was Providence," said Miss Roberta boldly. "Haven't we been *led*—all the way from St. Marylebone?"

"We have been *hustled*," corrected Miss Pye. "And if you think Providence approves of pony-racing—"

"How do you know they're ponies?" asked Miss Roberta eagerly.

"I saw it on one of the notices. But ponies or horses, it's all the same thing."

"Oh no," said Miss Roberta, "I'd much rather have ponies. They're smaller, you know. And I do think, as we're here, we might just go and look at them."

Although two years younger, Miss Roberta had always taken the lead. She took it now, and with a hand hooked under her sister's elbow propelled her firmly between the stands to a sort of open paddock bounded by white railings; and here even Miss Pye breathed freely, for the aspect of the place was positively domestic.

Family groups picnicked upon the grass, children ran shouting in the sun, elderly couples walked soberly up and down. An occasional beer bottle caught Miss Roberta's eye, but thermos flasks predominated. It was like the beach at Broadstairs, with the stands for boarding-houses and the row of bookies for the donkey-boys on the parade. Miss Roberta observed these last with interest, and found them a most respectable-looking set of men: if their voices were rather hoarse, that was doubtless due to their open-air life . . .

"I wonder where the Tote is?" she mused aloud. "It's another way of betting money, you know, something like a slot-machine."

"You have too much to do with those Wolf Cubs," returned Miss Pye rather tartly.

She walked quickly towards the course, intending to avoid the crowd; but since the three o'clock race had just begun, her example was largely followed. In a few moments, the two ladies were hemmed in against the railings and staring, like their neighbours, up the green stretch; only unlike their neighbours they did not know what to expect.

The sudden onrush of the ponies, the flash of the jockeys' coats, took them both unawares; the closeness and the speed made Miss Pye at least feel as though she had been narrowly missed by a thunderbolt. As for Miss Roberta, as her first words showed, she had been absolutely struck.

"If we backed one and won fifty pounds," said Miss Roberta clearly, "we shouldn't have to sell the miniature."

Her sister jumped.

"*Backed* one, Roberta?"

"Put money on one. And then, when it won, we should get a lot more."

Instead of at once changing the subject, Miss Pye rashly asked a question.

"But how," she inquired shrewdly, "can you tell which is going to win?"

"You just guess," explained Miss Roberta airily. "It's all

luck—like that raffle we had at the Bazaar. I'm almost certain I could do it."

Miss Pye opened her mouth to deliver a peremptory rebuke; but either because the vicissitudes of the journey had really affected her brain, or possibly because the genius of the place seized and twisted her words, the rebuke was never uttered. All she said was:

"Don't put on more than half a crown, dear!"

The half-crown already extracted from her bag, Miss Roberta, followed by Miss Pye, edged back into the crowd before the stands. Her spirit was still high, but though she had talked so lightly of picking winners, she had very little notion how to set about it.

Her only preference in horseflesh was for the cream or dapple, and though there was a huge signboard giving the ponies' names, it made no mention of their colour. She also knew, from a poem, that Arab steeds were fleet; but there was nothing about Arabs either. As though out of mere politeness, she turned and asked her sister's advice.

"What sort of horses do *you* like, dear?"

"Percherons," answered Miss Pye promptly. "I always remember, that summer we stayed on the farm, what gentle faces they had."

Miss Roberta sighed. She was practically sure that Percherons did not race—and in any case, they were too big to be ponies. It was at this juncture that a voice from behind them—so apposite that it might have been the voice of Conscience itself—suddenly spoke.

"Want a winner, lady?" asked the voice affably.

They turned round and observed a dapper little gentleman in a check suit. Whether by accident or design, he was leaning against a sort of small signpost, and on the signpost it said "Sandy, the Lucky Scot."

"Yes," said Miss Roberta quickly. "We want a winner very much."

At once, as though it were the most natural thing in the world, the gentleman whipped out an envelope and thrust it into her hand. Before Miss Roberta could open it, however, he followed up the gesture with a demand for sixpence.

"But why sixpence?" asked Miss Roberta.

The Lucky Scot looked at her with admiration.

"Because yer goin' to win two quid for two bob, lady, and I ain't a bloomin' philanthropist. You get two quid, I get a tanner; and if that ain't fair, I dunno what is."

"It does seem very reasonable," murmured Miss Pye. "I wonder he doesn't ask more."

"Hush!" said Miss Roberta, hastily passing over the coin and

leading her sister away. "He knows his own business best. I wonder what the horse's name is?"

To their slight embarrassment it was Bachelor's Shirt, but after a good deal of advice and piloting from interested spectators—"They really seem very *helpful* here!" said Miss Pye—the ladies succeeded in buying a two-shilling ticket at the Tote. Then they followed the stream, and climbed up a stand, and stood in happy confidence waiting to see their horse win.

Of the eleven runners, Bachelor's Shirt was tenth.

Now the late Reverend Charles Pye, though as mild an old gentleman as ever held a living, had nevertheless been able to produce, as occasion required, a fine denunciatory style; and his blood now boiled in his daughters' veins. Without a word, in perfect unison, Miss Pye and Miss Roberta nipped down from the stand and darted and dived through the crowd after the bobbing thistle-painted sign.

"You, man!" cried Miss Pye breathlessly.

The Lucky Scot turned and saw them. With unparalleled effrontery he even grinned.

"It didn't win!" accused Miss Roberta.

"It was last but one!" cried Miss Pye.

The creature shrugged.

"All in the luck of the game, ladies. I'd have bet my bottom dollar—"

"Don't prevaricate," said Miss Roberta. "You sold it us as a winner, and it didn't win. It's downright dishonesty!"

As well he might, the Lucky Scot gazed at them in stupefaction. For if they had their code of ethics, so had he; and his profession of tipster was justified—even hallowed—by every unwritten law of the race-course. His surprise and indignation, both boundless, found their only natural outlet.

"May I be damned," he began methodically, "may I be double-damned and double—"

"And don't use oaths," said Miss Pye severely. "You'll either pay what we should have won, or—or I'll fetch the police!"

The Scot glanced round. A small but appreciative crowd had already gathered, and there was no doubt whose side it was on. With ready chivalry it had plumped unanimously for the two old girls. "Go it, Ma!" cried the crowd heartily, and though the phrase offended her ears, Miss Pye was nevertheless emboldened by it. She looked the creature in the eye and positively defied him.

"Well, what *did* win?" he asked, weakening.

This was an awkward moment, for in their righteous haste neither lady had stopped to see. But the mob rushed to their aid.

"Rose Marie!" prompted the mob joyfully. "Twenty to one!"

"Or if you want the Tote dividend," added a gentleman more joyfully still, "it's fifty-eight-and-six."

"Then it's a bloomin' swindle!" shouted the enraged Scot. "It's a put-up job!"

"It is indeed!" cried Miss Roberta warmly. "We shall go to the police at once!"

"And if you can't control yourself," added Miss Pye, "we shall charge you with obscene language as well . . ."

The tipster paused. He had a pretty good idea that on the first count at least no bobby would charge him; but there were several reasons why any contact with the police was in itself undesirable. They had nothing definite against him, but just at that moment he had no desire to thrust himself, as it were, on their notice . . . With a sudden change of demeanour he approached Miss Roberta's ear.

"See here, lady," he murmured, "s'pose I give you another tip instead—*real* dead cert—horse I'm going to put me own shirt on—how'll that do?"

The ladies whispered together.

"Yes," said Miss Roberta finally. "We're going to give you one more chance."

With a stub of pencil, on the back of an envelope, the tipster hastily scrawled a name, and, beseeching them not to disclose it to anyone else, urged his two tormentors in the direction of the Tote. Then he took out a handkerchief and thankfully applied it to his brow.

Contrary to his usual practice, the Lucky Scot left his signpost and mounted a stand to watch the next race, for he felt an unusually strong interest in the fate of the tip. The Misses Pye were standing directly before and a little way below him, so that if by unlucky chance they lost again he was fairly certain of being able to escape them. Had he known, as he did not, that they had backed the pony Chipmunk to the extent of a whole five shillings, he would probably have taken no risks, but left the course at once.

Chipmunk won.

"Thank 'eaven for that!" ejaculated the Scot piously, and, once more mopping his brow, slipped back to the old pitch. He had not been there more than fifteen minutes, however, when his brief complacency was violently dispelled.

"You, man!" shrilled Miss Roberta.

"My Gawd!" cried the Scot in horror. "What's up now?"

"We can't get our money!" cried the ladies in chorus. "We went up to the window, and they wouldn't pay us! What shall we do now?"

Sandy the Scot groaned aloud. Though lacking the advantages

of a classical education, he could by this time have given a pretty accurate description of the Furies. They were a cross between old ladies and bloodhounds, and there was no escaping them.

"Here, let's see yer ticket," he said wearily.

Miss Pye displayed it.

"Yer on the Tote double, lady. Yer got to pick another 'orse fer the five o'clock, on the same ticket, see, 'n if that one wins too yer got a whole packet."

After he had explained it two or three times, the sisters withdrew and held a short conference. Then Miss Pye returned with hand outstretched.

"Here's your sixpence, and we'll have another winner, please."

"Not from me you won't," said the Scot firmly.

"What shall we do now?" whispered Miss Roberta.

They were already in the Tote queue, passing steadily along, and owing to their passage with the Lucky Scot, and to the urgent necessity of refreshing themselves with tea, they had not had time even to see what ponies were running.

"Have what the man in front has," counselled Miss Pye. "He's wearing opera-glasses."

They pressed up to the broad back and listened carefully.

"Seventeen," said the man in front.

"We'll have that, too," said Miss Roberta.

"Two," echoed the girl in the window; and that was how the Misses Pye picked the winner of the five o'clock.

They won fifty-three pounds; and their demeanour, as they collected the money, was so noticeably that of sleep-walkers that a benevolent policeman escorted them to the gate and put them in a taxi and told the driver to see them on the train.

Miss Roberta's only conscious act was to give the taxi-man a pound. He put them into a first-class carriage, and since no one else got in they were able to take out the miniature and hold it alternately. At Marylebone Station, Miss Pye put the other odd pounds into a box for railway charities and, as they then found they had no money of their own left, they were forced to walk all the way home to Portaferry Road.

More exhausted than they had ever been in their lives, the two old ladies at last turned the corner and reached No. 7. In the top window a light showed.

"He's here!" said Miss Roberta, suddenly alert.

"Then we can have supper at once," said her sister thankfully.

"We shall have to speak to him first. Do pull yourself together, dear."

With straight backs and stern faces they toiled up the three

flights of stairs. At the sitting-room door Miss Roberta even managed a frown. But as soon as they entered, as soon as their nephew turned to face them, all sternness melted away. Henry Pye stood rigid as though at attention, white-faced and weary-eyed; and on the table behind him the cake-tin was unopened.

"Well, dear boy," said Miss Pye affectionately, "it's nice to see you," and she took the wad of notes from her bag and slipped it into his hand.

With one abrupt movement, as though his knees had suddenly given way, Henry sat down.

"Is it—is it all here?"

"Yes, dear, fifty pounds," said Miss Roberta.

She spoke as calmly as she could, but the moment was a dreadful one.

Henry looked so white, so racked, that the hearts of both old women yearned towards him; yet at the same time both in their hearts knew that he ought not to go unscathed. He should be—not punished, but made to remember.

"I've just been a plain damn fool, Auntie."

"Don't swear, dear," said Miss Pye—but sympathetically.

"Just tell us how it happened," urged Miss Roberta, "and then you'll feel better."

The boy looked from one old face to the other.

"I—borrowed—some money out of the Sports Fund," he said at last. "I'd got into a mess. You see, I'd been backing horses."

The two ladies sat very still. Miss Pye was white, Miss Roberta scarlet.

"That's why I had to ask you. And when I got here this evening and saw what you'd done, I felt—I felt like the worst cad on earth."

The eyes of all three turned to the empty easel. In Miss Pye's bag the miniature weighed like lead. She rose and walked stiffly to the mantelpiece.

"My dear boy—"

"No," said Henry quickly, "leave it there. Leave it there whenever I come. I want it to remind me." And quite suddenly—like the face of a small boy who has confessed and been forgiven—his face lightened.

He got up, and gave each of his aunts a kiss, and then involuntarily yawned. Emotion had so worn him out that, five minutes later, when Miss Pye came in with the supper-tray, he was stretched on the sofa and fast asleep.

"Roberta!" whispered Miss Pye. "What are we to do?"

"We must go on deceiving him," said Miss Roberta.

"But that's wicked!"

"Then we must *be* wicked, for Henry's sake. It will be a lesson to him all his life. Whereas if he knew how we *had* got the money—"

"Yes," agreed Miss Pye. Her eyes rested a moment, almost wistfully, on the wad of notes. "You know, dear, I do see the temptation myself."

"So do I," said Miss Roberta. "And that's another reason for keeping the stand empty. To remind *us* as well . . ."

* * *

OF DANCING

This is true Love, by that true Cupid got,
Which danceth galliards in your amorous eyes,
But to your frozen heart approacheth not ;
Only your heart he dares not enterprize ;
And yet through every other part he flies,
And everywhere he nimbly danceth now,
That in yourself, yourself perceive not how.

For your sweet beauty, daintily transfused
With due proportion throughout every part,
What is it but a dance where Love hath used
His finer cunning and more curious art ;
Where all the elements themselves impart,
And turn, and wind, and mingle with such measure,
That th'eye that sees it, surfeits with the pleasure ?

Love in the twinkling of your eyelids danceth ;
Love danceth in your pulses, and your veins ;
Love, when you sew, your needle's point advanceth,
And makes it dance a thousand curious strains
Of winding rounds, whereof the form remains,
To show that your fair hands can dance the Hay,
Which your fine feet would learn as well as they.

And when your ivory fingers touch the strings
Of any silver sounding instrument,
Love makes them dance to those sweet murmurings,
With busy skill and cunning excellent.
Oh, that your feet those tunes would represent
With artificial motions to and fro,
That Love, this art in every part might show.

SIR J. DAVIES, *Orchestra, or a Poem of Dancing*, 1596

SAINT SIMON

The girl had been born on the very day the bell was cast

by F. E. ELLWOOD

WE had seen Adam already, my wife and I, with another old man in the bar parlour of the Handy Milkman. We were a bit dubious about calling there actually, for we were on our way for a week-end stay with the vicar. But the day was hot and the beer was cool, and Dick Sanson was an old friend of ours. We hadn't seen him since our Oxford days, but if he hadn't changed much in the last five years we were sure he wouldn't disapprove.

Something we had heard Adam say had made me curious and I was waiting for a chance to ask Dick about it, but I didn't need to, and as things turned out it was lucky I didn't. Dick was telling us during lunch about his cook, who had been reduced to a state of terror by a mouse in the kitchen that same morning, and from there, I forget how, the talk had turned to reincarnations.

"Basilisk?" my wife was saying. "My family had a maid in India who thought she'd been a centipede. A lethargic sort of girl, and come to think of it the loss of ninety-eight legs must have been something of a blow. It was going to be all right in the end though, because in the next life she was scheduled to be a falcon—or was it an eagle, Henry?"

"A hawk," I said. "Wasn't there a man who thought he'd been a sofa—French, I think?"

"Wrote his reminiscences," said Dick. "All he'd seen and overheard while he was a sofa."

"What a splendid idea," said my wife.

"But that's nothing," added Dick. "We have a man right here in the village who thinks his lifelong enemy is a bell."

"A dinner bell?" asked my wife.

"No," said Dick. "A church bell. A great strapping two-ton tenor one. Saint Simon, it's called, and he rings this bell believing it's a deadly enemy of his and he's keeping it in its place. What is the time? Five to two? Then you'll probably be hearing him any minute now; they're doing a new peal of Grandsire in the morning and they're due for a practice at two." He turned to the window. "Look," he said. "There, coming through the gate, that's the man. Adam, his name is. Adam Stevens."

We looked through the window across the vicarage garden and over the low hedge into the churchyard. And there he was, the old man with the shock of white hair and the bright blue eyes, the same old man we had seen in the pub. I was just about to tell Dick what he had said when my wife broke in:

"But Dick, he looks too slight—and too old—to be ringing a heavy bell. And I thought change-ringing was sheer hard work."

"So it is," said Dick. "And a peal of Grandsire lasts anything up to three hours. But you see nobody but Adam has rung that bell for fifty years, and nobody is likely to while he's alive. And of course he's a good deal stronger than he looks . . ."

We took our coffee cups to the open french windows. The ringing had started and against the shattering noise of the bells, almost overhead, it was difficult to make oneself heard. In and out they went, shifting places, rising, falling, the smaller bells ringing their changes and the deep note of the tenor booming below. It made me wish I knew more about bell-ringing, but of course I didn't know then what I know now; for I hadn't heard Dick's story. If ever I find myself ringing bells I warn my wife I shall take every precaution.

"Tell us about Adam," I said when we had shut the windows and settled down again.

"I intended to," said Dick. "But you understand it's my grandfather's story and nothing whatever to do with me . . ."

"Adam," Dick said; "had an irate old tyrant of a father who farmed the land down by Hicker's Mill half a mile along the road. When he left school—it's nearly sixty years ago, the time I'm speaking of—he was only eleven, and since the old man wouldn't have him around the place, said there wasn't enough work for him on the farm, he was packed off to Polcester to serve as apprentice in Haskett's bell foundry.

"It was there, of course, that young Adam got into the habit of believing anything about bells you might care to tell him. He was an imaginative lad by all accounts, and his employer, old Haskett, took a fancy to him from the start and put all sorts of weird notions into his head.

"Old Tom Haskett had such a passion for his bells that when he retired he came to live here in the village just to be within earshot of Saint Simon, the favourite of all the hundreds of bells he had cast in his time. He had a queer fancy that the bell was always trying to get away. Oh yes, he was as mad as a hatter, old Haskett.

"Well, about the time old Haskett retired, Adam's father died and Mrs. Stevens, his mother, persuaded him to come home and look after the farm. Not that Adam needed much persuasion since

the Hasketts were moving too, for as far as the Hasketts were concerned there was another attraction for Adam, and an even more alluring one than the bells.

" Adam, by the way, was a handsome youth of twenty by this time, with a great thatch of curly black hair.

" You see old Haskett had a daughter. A lovely thing in an elfish sort of way, long, narrow green eyes, slanting and set wide apart, rich masses of pale gold hair . . .

" Yes, Haskett's daughter was something very special. She was his only child, born in his late middle age, and the apple of his eye. Perhaps that's why the old man was so attached to Saint Simon, because the girl had been born on the very day the bell was cast, and he'd named his daughter Simonie.

" Adam had lodged with the Hasketts for all the nine years he'd been away, so he'd practically grown up with Simonie, and when I show you a picture of the two of them taken at the wedding, you'll certainly see why he wanted her. Oh, yes, she married him all right.

" Adam's farm was all of two hundred acres. She kept him waiting a couple of years after Adam came home, going to the schoolroom socials and to the fairs at Polcester, and for walks on Sunday nights first with one village lad and then with another ; and especially with a red-haired young Lothario named Sammy Jenkins who taught in the school and played the organ on Sundays.

" Sammy's still alive as a matter of fact, lives in the same old cottage across the lane from Adam's farmhouse. There aren't many of the old ones left now.

" Of course the whole village was curious to see how the marriage would turn out. She was a seductive little witch and everybody thought Adam would have his hands full. Most people were sorry for him and there wasn't anybody who expected less than the worst.

" But for a time all went well. Adam's mother died in a 'flu epidemic soon after they were married, and Simonie took over. To everyone's surprise she seemed to make him a good wife after all, cooked and sewed and swept, and shined all those brass and copper things that old Mrs. Stevens had kept on the mantelpiece. Yes, all went well until the day of the Polcester Fair, after they'd been married nearly a year.

" On Fair days Adam used to drive over to Polcester in his trap, stay the night at the Gryphon and come back next day. Well it was unlucky for Simonie, but that particular Fair was more crowded than usual. The Gryphon Inn had forgotten to keep Adam's room, and so round about midnight home came Adam, tired and looking for his welcome.

" He ran upstairs to look for Simonie, but the room was empty.

He searched everywhere, house, dairy, sheds, stables, the farmyard, in case she'd slipped and hurt herself, and altogether he must have made a dickens of a noise. At all events, when he got back to the house and took one more look inside the bedroom there she was, fast asleep, or so it seemed.

" I suppose most young women would have had the sense to invent some story, but no, not Simonie ! When Adam shook her and asked her for an explanation she said he must have been dreaming, he must be overtired after his journey, and why would she want to be out at this time of night anyway ? And poor Adam wanted to believe it, but couldn't quite swallow it, and determined to watch his pretty wife a bit more closely in future.

" Perhaps he'd have forgotten all about it in time if it hadn't happened again a little while later, the night when Adam sat up with the sick cow. She'd have got away with it too, if she had not tripped over a bucket or a rake, or something.

" Adam said nothing at all to his wife, but he said quite a lot to old Haskett next morning. He was across the fields to the Haskett cottage as soon as it was light—what happened to the sick cow I don't know—and although nobody knows exactly what he said in the heat of the moment, the general gist of it was that old Haskett had better take his wayward daughter back again before violence was done.

" Old Haskett's reaction was surprising enough, and it shattered poor Adam. I told you he believed that Saint Simon was always trying to get away ? Well, now he waved his arms about like a maniac and started to shout.

" ' It's Simon,' he said. ' My bell and my girl. Twins you understand. Born on the same day. When that bell sails away the girl goes with him ! '

" I told you he was crazy.

" Well, according to Adam there was a horrid look of triumph on the old man's face. You don't believe me ? ' he said. You mark my words. One of these days she won't come back. She won't ever come back again.'

" Adam didn't know what to think or do. You might well ask why he didn't dismiss old Haskett as a madman right away, and go home and give Simonie what she most deserved. But he was a strange lad, and sensitive, you understand, and he'd been under old Haskett's influence for years. And, of course, he was country bred, with centuries of belief in devils and witchcraft behind him.

" The bell that went away and took Simonie, no, it couldn't be. And yet—what if it could ? Adam got so far and realized that one thing was certain, he wanted Simonie back. And that's where my grandfather came in.

"It was quite natural for Adam, I suppose, to come to my grandfather. He'd been away from the village a long time and there was nobody else he could confide in; and in any case there was always the lingering tradition in country villages of white magic and black. But I shouldn't have cared to be in my grandfather's shoes at the time.

"He was only a few years older than Adam, my grandfather, a gentle, credulous soul, but he had a pretty flair for sizing up a situation fairly accurately. He knew right away that mere reasoning with Adam would do no good.

"Action was what was needed, to gain time if nothing more. And although things looked black against Simonie, poor grandfather didn't positively *know* what, if anything, was going on. And while he was listening to Adam's story he seemed to remember having heard something of the sort before. He took a book out of its shelf and hunted for the place. It was Brand's *Antiquities*—you can look it up for yourselves if you like.

"'Listen, Adam,' my grandfather said. 'It says here in this book that when you move a bell, as Saint Simon was moved to our belfry for instance, it sometimes takes a trip away in the night. That is, it says, unless the bell is "exercised" in the evening.

"'I suppose,' my grandfather went on, 'that's to tire it out, you see. Now it seems to me that here's what you have to do. You have to give that bell so much exercise that it will never feel like leaving the belfry again. Have you ever rung a bell, Adam?'

"Adam hadn't.

"'Well,' said my grandfather, 'now's the time to start.'

"And start he did. That very evening he began to toll the bell until the whole village nearly went mad. You have no idea what a heavy tenor bell can do to human nerves if it goes on ringing long enough, especially when you live just underneath the belfry. And this, you understand, with paralysing monotony night after night.

"But at last when they couldn't bear it any longer, the village sent a deputation to see my grandfather. Something, they said, had to be done about it. They liked Adam, and they realized that there was something behind all this that they didn't quite understand, and they weren't asking what it was, but enough was enough.

"And then my grandfather had another idea. Here in the church was a fine ring of eight bells, used only for weddings and funerals, and up and down the scale for the two Sunday services. Next morning he sent for a change-ringing expert from the Abbey at Polcester, found seven volunteers from the village, young lads all out for the fun of the thing and ready to try anything once—and made Adam their leader.

" It took time, but gradually they learned to ring the bells in changes. The expert pronounced his blessing on Adam, said he had 'ropesight,' which I gather was something quite high in the way of praise. And all of them grew more enthusiastic as they got better and better; Adam of course most enthusiastic of all because he had special reason to be, ringing his bell for dear life so that it shouldn't carry off Simonie. And now they—or their descendants—are as pretty a band of ringers as you'd find almost anywhere. And that," Dick concluded, " is the story of Adam."

There was a pause.

" Well ? " we said.

" Well, what ? " said Dick.

" Simonie," we said. " What about Simonie ? "

" Ah," said Dick. " Of course all went well after that."

" Oh come," said my wife. " You don't mean to tell me—"

Dick laughed. " The bell ? " he said. " Oh no, not the bell. Haven't you guessed ? Of course you have ; it was Sammy Jenkins all the time. The cottage across the lane, remember. So convenient. And naturally it was *much* more convenient when Adam began to ring his bell.

" With the church half a mile away, and a great tenor bell that could be heard for miles around the countryside—why it was as safe as—as the Bank of England. Nobody but Adam ever rang that bell, and while it was ringing and she and Sammy could *hear* it ringing—well, you see what I mean ? "

" Yes," I said. " I see what you mean. But surely lots of people must have known what was going on ? "

" Eventually everybody knew," said Dick. " But they're good folk around here, and nobody ever told Adam. What would have been the point in telling him, anyway ? I suppose it was all terribly immoral, but I doubt if it would have improved matters to have brought things to a head ; the village had a new interest, Simonie had both Sammy and Adam and all that went with being Adam's wife—he was making a tidy little fortune out of his farm by now—and Adam had Simonie, or thought he had, *and* his bell—what more could you want ? "

We thought it over.

" And what," said my wife at last, " about your grandfather ? "

" Ah," Dick said. " It certainly worried him when he knew what he'd done. I don't think he believed at first that there was anything really wrong. But in the end he had to face the facts ; even the worst one of all, that it was he who had smoothed the hussy's primrose path.

" But he couldn't go back on it, could he ? He couldn't break up

Adam's home, and he might even have had a murder or two on his hands and that would have been *much* worse. And at best he'd have made Adam an unhappy man, and he's not unhappy now. Look at him."

The bells had finished ringing while Dick was talking and we watched the ringers leave the church. With Adam was a man in, I suppose, his middle forties; he had a thin face and red hair. Another man, an old man, was coming up the path to meet them. He was the same old man we had seen in the pub with Adam that morning. I remembered what we heard Adam say to him, and I turned to Dick. But my wife spoke first.

"Who is that?" she said.

"That's Adam's best friend," said Dick. "He is Sammy Jenkins."

"And the other man, the one with red hair?"

"That's Andrew. His son."

"Sammy's son?" said my wife. "Of course, how silly of me. Red hair. You didn't say that Sammy was married, Dick."

"No," said Dick firmly. "Not Sammy's son. Adam's."

We looked again. "Oh," we said.

"Sammy and Adam," Dick said, "are quite devoted to each other, and I must say that Sammy's been as good to Andrew as if he were his own son."

"And you still say that Adam doesn't know about Simonie and Sammy?" I asked.

"No," said Dick. "Of course he doesn't know. Simonie's been dead now for about fifteen years, died quite unexpectedly in her sleep. No, he never will know now."

We've talked it all over, my wife and I, and we give it up. How could any man as intelligent as Dick, whom we thought we knew well, be quite so credulous? Credulous enough to believe that any man could be quite as gullible as Adam? And Adam's son. Had Dick really forgotten about Sammy's red hair? And then Simonie, who died so unexpectedly in her sleep—?

We've come to one conclusion, and it's simply this: that among all these conspiracies of silence just one more will do no harm. So we've decided that never, never, never, in any circumstances, will we tell anybody *what* it was we heard Adam say to Sammy that Saturday morning in the bar parlour of the Handy Milkman.

* * *

When you have finished reading this copy of ARGOSY, *why not pass it on to a member of H.M. Forces?*

HAPPY FAMILIES

He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases

LEWIS CARROLL

When he came into the world he came howling, and he howled without ceasing for seven long years, except at the times when he happened to be partaking of nourishment, or was fast asleep, and, even then, he snored with a note of defiance and protest which proved that his humour was not for peace. The time came when he ceased to howl and became fascinated by the problem of how to make other people howl. In this art he became an adept. When he and another child chanced to be left together there came, apparently from the uttermost ends of the earth, a pin, and the other child and the pin were soon in violent and lamentable conjunction.

So he grew.

JAMES STEPHENS, *Here Are Ladies*

Unmistakable

Babe or Baby : A misshapen creature of no particular age, sex, or condition, chiefly remarkable for the violence of the sympathies and antipathies it excites in others, itself without sentiment or emotion.

AMBROSE BIERCE, *The Devil's Dictionary*

Willing Pupils

"What are you children doing out here?" demanded Mrs. Quabarl the next morning, on finding Irene sitting rather glumly at the head of the stairs, while her sister was perched in an attitude of depressed discomfort on the window-seat behind her, with a wolf-skin rug almost covering her.

"We are having a history lesson," came the unexpected reply. "I am supposed to be Rome, and Viola up there is the she-wolf; not a real wolf, but the figure of one that the Romans used to set store by—I forget why. Claude and Wilfrid have gone to fetch the shabby women."

"The shabby women?"

"Yes, they've got to carry them off. They didn't want to, but Miss Hope got one of father's fives-bats and said she'd give them a number nine spanking if they didn't, so they've gone to do it."

A loud, angry screaming from the direction of the lawn drew Mrs. Quabarl thither in hot haste, fearful lest the threatened

castigation might even now be in process of infliction. The outcry, however, came principally from the two small daughters of the lodge-keeper, who were being hauled and pushed towards the house by the panting and dishevelled Claude and Wilfrid, whose task was rendered even more arduous by the incessant, if not very effectual, attacks of the captured maidens' small brother. The governess, fives-bat in hand, sat negligently on the stone balustrade, presiding over the scene with the cold impartiality of a Goddess of Battles. A furious and repeated chorus of " I'll tell muvver " rose from the lodge children, but the lodge-mother, who was hard of hearing, was for the moment immersed in the preoccupation of her washtub. After an apprehensive glance in the direction of the lodge . . . Mrs. Quabarl flew indignantly to the rescue of the struggling captives.

" Wilfrid ! Claude ! Let those children go at once. Miss Hope, what on earth is the meaning of this scene ? "

" Early Roman history ; the Sabine women, don't you know ? It's the Schartz-Metterklume method to make children understand history by acting it themselves ; fixes it in their memory, you know. Of course, if, thanks to your interference, your boys go through life thinking that the Sabine women ultimately escaped, I really cannot be held responsible."

SAKI, *The Schartz-Metterklume Method*

Refugee

May I join you in the doghouse, Rover ?
I wish to retire till the party's over.
Since three o'clock I've done my best
To entertain each tiny guest ;
My conscience now I've left behind me,
And if they want me, let them find me.
I blew their bubbles, I sailed their boats,
I kept them from each other's throats.
I told them tales of magic lands,
I took them out to wash their hands.
I sorted their rubbers and tied their laces,
I wiped their noses and dried their faces.
Of similarity there's lots
'Twixt tiny tots and Hottentots . . .

Oh, little women and little men,
Someday I hope to love you again,
But not till after the party's over,
So give me the key to the doghouse, Rover.

OGDEN NASH

Good Riddance

The Servant has come for the little Browns this morning—they have been a toothache to me which I shall enjoy the riddance of . . .

JOHN KEATS, *in a letter, April 15th*, 1819

Stern Parent

Father heard his children scream,
So he threw them in the stream,
Saying, as he drowned the third,
" Children should be seen, not heard."

HARRY GRAHAM, *Ruthless Rhymes*

Little Bernhardt's Brother

A veil of tears came suddenly over Eddie's large dark eyes. " My Pop told me he don't want to see me for a year."

" What'd ye do ? " the Custodian asked . . .

Eddie blew his nose and the tears left his eyes. " I hit my sister with a lamp. A bridge lamp." His mouth tightened in retrospect. " I would do it again. Her name's Diana. She's fifteen years old."

" That's nice," the Custodian said. " You're a fine little boy, all around."

" It took four stitches. She cried for five hours. *Diana !* She said I mighta ruined her beauty."

" Well, it wouldn't do her beauty no good, hitting her with a bridge lamp," the Custodian said reasonably.

" She's going to be an actress. A stage actress."

" That's nice for a girl," the Custodian said.

" Aaah," Eddie snorted. " What's nice about it ? She takes lessons from dancing teachers and French teachers and English teachers and horseback and music teachers and Pop is always kissin' her and callin' her his little Bernhardt. She stinks."

" That's no way to talk about yer sister," the Custodian said sternly. " I won't listen to a little boy talkin' like that about his sister."

" Aaah, shut up ! " Eddie said bitterly. " Little Bernhardt. Pop's an actor, too. The whole damn family's actors. Except me," he said with sombre satisfaction.

IRWIN SHAW, *Mixed Company*

Last Straw

Besides, they always smell of bread and butter.

LORD BYRON, *Beppo*

★*Adventure in the jungle is every boy's dream. George realized his at eight years old when, with his parents, he went in search of the fabulous bird's nest caves of Borneo. His mother—already well-known for her books about life in the East, "Land Below the Wind" and "Three Came Home"—describes the adventure in her recent book about post-war life in North Borneo, "White Man Returns."*

QUEST IN THE JUNGLE

by AGNES NEWTON KEITH

IN the days when human sacrifices were made to pagan gods, when head hunting was a happy pastime and human heads hung from native roofs as coconuts hang from trees, the bird's nest caves were to early Borneo what gold was to pioneer California. The Gomantong Caves alone on the Kinabatangan produced 25,000 dollars' worth of nests yearly, a huge fortune in those days, and this sum represented the greatest native wealth in all North Borneo. Possession of these caves was claimed by a peaceful, timid, native tribe, the Buludupies, whose leadership Pengiran Digadong Samah had forcibly acquired by being the opposite of peaceful and timid. Soon the Pengiran came to consider the caves as his own private property, although he still generously permitted his tribesmen to do the work of collecting the nests, a specialist's job of climbing to great heights on bamboo poles and rattan ladders, for which their lifetime of training fitted them.

Being a sturdy individualist and not one to go along with progress, when the states comprising North Borneo were turned over to the Chartered Company and the white man came to rule, the Pengiran did not fall into line. He continued to collect taxes, distribute poison, hack up his enemies, promote his friends and collect wives.

Finally a time came when the police of the white men had enough of this rugged individualism, and they went up the river with guns. But this wasn't the old story of the native who had no guns: the Kinabatangan people under Digadong's tutelage had old muzzle-loaders and tower muskets, and in addition to blow-pipes, knives and poison, they met the police with these. When the white men saw the natives with guns, Digadong's last chance was gone.

The guns spoke, the Buludupies' ancient muskets lost aim, exploded, went wild. Not so the white man's—Pengiran Digadong Samah fell, and a legend was done.

From then on the Government hired contractors to work the caves and collect the birds' nests, the Government to keep one half of the gross profits, and the contractors and their hired labour the other half. For the people who had once owned the nests there was nothing, except that the work of collecting must be done by them for a share in the contractor's profits.

Today, the most satisfying source of revenue to both natives and Government is the harvesting, sale, and export to China of birds' nests from the fifteen famous cave groups of North Borneo which are a byword wherever bird's nest soup is sipped.

The vital ingredient of bird's nest soup is not feathers, sticks, twigs, or grass—but, as is known to epicures, it is the inspissated saliva of adult swiftlets. This is a secretion from the salivary glands of certain swiftlets, with which they make their nests. The saliva hardens on exposure to the air into something like isinglass, and this is the edible ingredient of birds' nests.

Nests are attached at great and inaccessible heights inside the inky chambers of the limestone caves when the nest-building urge comes to the small, dark-plumaged, white-bellied swiftlet. When nests are completed and eggs are ready for hatching, both nest and eggs are collected by natives, leaving the frantic swiftlet balked of its mission.

Once, twice, and a third time the bird makes its nest every year, and the third time the swiftlet is permitted to hatch her eggs and the nests are not taken until after the birds are fledged. Nests are collected by expert native climbers from several tribes, among these the original Buludupies, and the Orang Sungei, who with lifelong training mount rattan ladders to daring heights of four to nine hundred feet to steal the nests.

The caves are also inhabited by myriads of bats, and the winging beat of their startled flight floods the caves with eerie sound as the intruder feels his way through darkness, drawing his breath with acrid distress on account of the ammoniated fumes of bat dirt. Feeling his way over the damp floor of the caves he creeps over a moving, seething mass of cockroaches and cave centipedes, as he looks upwards in vain for a view of the nests. Not until climbers mount and light the cavern roof with torches and candles will he see the drab, non-spectacular, greyish cups clinging far above him to damp cave walls—cups which mean home to the swiftlets, and epicurean soup in China.

Birds' nests are classified in North Borneo as forest produce, and in most cases the caves are in Forest Reserves. For this reason

the harvesting, revenue, responsibility for and conservation of the industry, except in the case of a few native-owned caves, is the concern of the Forest Department, and is of vital interest to my husband, Harry, who is Conservator of Forests and Wild Life in North Borneo.

Unless you know jungle travel you will think it ridiculous that a limestone hill full of sizable caves is lost, when it is within a known radius of seven miles. But despite their reported fabulous value the Shaitan's Caves remain both lost and unexplored. The natives will not talk of weather, broken bridges, or mud, but of a dark, evil, all-powerful Spirit, a Shaitan, who guards the approach to the caves. They will tell you that upon the tread of any mortal foot in this vicinity the lurking, vigilant Spirit deluges the jungle with torrential rain, thunder and lightning, and makes arrival at the caves impossible. And if the Spirit for a moment sleeps, and a human being successfully invades his privacy, the retribution is worse even than the angry elements—it is the loss of the thing the native values most highly—the loss of posterity.

A friend of ours, a Buludupi named Galpan, who acts as agent for the Government and for the natives who hold contracts for the removal of the birds' nests from Gomantong Caves, one day suggested to Harry that they organize a search for the lost caves ; an undertaking which, if successful, would profit the Government by a worth-while sum, and double Galpan's own taking as contractor. This proposed expedition was to Harry's exact taste, and he decided to accompany Galpan, taking our young son, George, with him.

Harry's diaries are always accurate and specific, and they tell the reader exactly the hour and day he arrived and departed from each given destination, and they are filled with correct and precise data, but human emotions have no place in them. This is quite impossible for me to understand, as Harry himself is exactly the opposite.

Any man who puts " Married 4 p.m." as a description of his wedding day, and " Son born 9 a.m." for final comment on the birth of his son and heir, is not one to paint the jungle with anything more colourful than mud. However, Harry promised me that on the forthcoming trip with George he would strike a really literary key—if he remembered, if he had time, and if there was anything to tell ! Meanwhile I began to feel myself getting involved unwillingly in another jungle trip.

When the men of my family returned ten days later, it did not surprise me that they both assured me that " nothing had happened," and each hurried off to his own preoccupation, George to a comic

paper and Harry to the office. I could wait for evening; then I knew I would be permitted to see the small, black leather book.

Evening came, the black book lay open before me and I turned hopefully, then less hopefully through its pages. I closed it, handed it back, and with an effort said nothing.

"Get anything out of it?"

"No."

"Didn't think you would. Really, nothing happened. The weather was horrible, we didn't find the caves and there isn't anything more to say about it—except that Galpan still thinks we may find them when we go again next month."

"Look, dear, you were ten days in the jungle. Didn't you notice *anything* about George? What he said, how he looked, or anything?"

"No, I didn't, he just looked dirty to me. Why don't you come yourself next time, and find out what he says and does?"

A groan.

"I suppose so."

Thirteen men, a boy and a woman who hates the jungle, stand, loll, squat on the soft surface of leaves which spread over the hard, black mud like a brown carpet over waxed linoleum. The skins of the boy, two men and the woman are sickly banana-yellow in the jungle light, and the rest are Dusun-and-Murut brown in shades of burnt sienna.

The elements have been at work, and as usual the rain falls. The dusk of noon suffuses the jungle in the half-light of a hidden world where we live in gloom, looking up at a roof of leaves, without seeing the sun. Outside the jungle, men drip with sweat; here we and the trees drip with rain.

"Shall I drink it out of the tin, Mum?" George suspends a condensed milk tin above his open mouth.

"Why not?"

The sweet, sticky milk goes down George's throat. "Ummm! Good!"

The brown-skins are eating cold rice, cooked the night before and carried with them to save time from building a fire, and Harry lights the primus stove to make coffee. George sits cross-legged with the coolies, and between his knees is a coconut shell full of cold rice given him by Ungib, a Dusun, his pal, who squats beside him. Ungib at eighteen and George at eight see things alike, the same jokes amuse and the same pleasures delight. Ungib grins into his rice bowl as he nimbly rolls the rice into balls with his finger tips and shoves it into his mouth. George does the same.

"Ummm! This cold rice is good!"

"I'll remember to add cold rice to your diet when we get home," I promised. George is an epicure at home.

"*I do like jungle travel, Ma. Don't you?*"

"Only when it's over, and I write about how wonderful it is."

"Ready?" says Harry. "We can't waste time."

"O.K., Dad. Can I have some milk chocolate to eat on the way?"

"Here you are. Do your leech bites bother you?"

"No, but look at the blood!" George points proudly to dried streamers of blood which have trailed down from each leech wound and caked like red paint on his legs.

"I suppose you're a seasoned traveller now." I look gloomily at my own raw legs. "Did you burn the leeches yourself with a cigarette?"

"Sure, Mum. I borrowed a cigarette from Ungib."

Ungib grins at the sound of his name, scratches himself, spits, gets to his feet, pulls his pack on his back and his pack strap over his forehead, and waits for the party to move. George, having performed the same processes, stands beside him.

"Let's get going now, George. This is the last stop before we pitch camp for the night. Stick close behind me."

"O.K., Dad. And Ungib next to me. Come, Ungib."

We had left Sandakan two days before by the *Elopura*, crossing the bay and travelling up the Kinabatangan as far as the landing at Lamag.

The next day the party is joined by ten Dusun carriers and Galpan, who has developed a further working theory as to where the Shaitan's caves are hidden, and believes that five or six days' search will serve to locate the hidden hills. Food for ten days is now packed in carrying receptacles to be taken with us into the jungle.

At dawn the next morning as the sky lightens to grey and a steady rain falls, we draw away from the launch in small native dug-outs, looking back to wave, then peering silently forward through the mist to the tree-walled jungle shore. Jungle travel at dawn is always a dismal adventure which requires fortitude more than daring and silence more than cheer, and not even George interrupts the sound of dripping paddles with his exuberant voice.

At the river's bank we form into single file with George and me in the middle and the carrying coolies last. Proceeding away from the river by Galpan's directions, the jungle proves only moderately heavy, but the land alternates between swamp and hillside so that we are always either plodding through mud, or pulling up and down hills. As it has been a good year for jungle fruit, illipe nuts,

meritam, lansat, and tampoi are still fruiting, and game is evident. Pig-wallows are frequent and muddy grey rumps slide out of sight into swamps; jibbering, grey, river monkeys swing through the tree tops; the cries of barking deer echo often in the distance, and elephant turds are underfoot to be stumbled over, but we move forward without stopping for game.

Light rains continue and every leaf quivers with a leech looping madly with ambition to attach himself to a passer-by. We have rubbed ourselves with leech repellent, a scented oil which protects while it adheres to the skin but washes away after a couple of hours of rain and mud, and now the leeches are attaching themselves to exposed portions. But as our bodies weary, the annoyance of the leech tickle is swamped in fatigue, and I have to remind myself that night is the time to dread, when itching begins and scratching continues. The natives move through the jungle without seeming to disturb a leaf, their eyes quick to note when a leech attaches, and they deal instant death by burning it with a cigarette, or scraping it off with the jungle knife which is always in their hands.

As the rain grows heavier, so do our feet. The jungle damp creeps like a chill in the bones and, although we drip with sweat, we are cold. I have my mind categorically fixed on the evening drink, food and bed, but George has his mind on Harry's rifle. He has survived the morning well, being perfect jungle size, almost the height of the average native. Tall travellers like myself catch their hair in trees and their feet in roots and bend double to stumble awkwardly through tunnels of vines cut by the natives to fit their own dimensions.

By three o'clock Harry is watching for a possible camp site, as in east coast jungle it is necessary to make camp by this hour if you hope to escape the heavier rains. If shelter is not established early, sleeping equipment will be soaked, camp fires won't burn, the night will be misery, and the next day a weary one.

By three-thirty a site is chosen on a slight rise in the least heavy part of the jungle, after first making sure that no dead trees are near to fall in a storm. The coolies clear ground for camp, and Harry and George break branches and chop stumps for firewood. I bring out the gin bottle, and George refreshes himself otherwise.

"More chocolate please, Mum!"

"I thought I just gave you some."

"I gave it to Ungib."

I hand out a fresh bar of milk and nuts.

"Are you very tired?"

"Not tired at all. Isn't this chocolate good?" The chocolate mingles on George's face with mud, sweat and rain.

"Hurry up with the firewood, or we'll never eat," interrupts

Harry. " Where's your pal Ungib ? He doesn't seem to be very energetic about making camp."

" He heard a deer call, and went to see. He's a wonderful shot, Dad."

Usually Harry travels with a light tent of sufficient size to cover himself and a companion, leaving the coolies to rely on kajang thatches, as is the native custom. But even a light tent is a heavy load after a wet night, and on this trip Harry has abandoned the tent theory and we all sleep under kajang thatching brought from the launch.

The thatches used are made from palm leaves sewn into three-by-five-foot strips with a fold in the centre, and thirty kajang are enough to shelter all the party.

Now the men cut a number of saplings and lash these together with rattan strips to form a framework. The trees which have been left standing at convenient distances support the ridge-pole, which is lashed to them at a distance of four feet from the ground. Using the pole as a crossbeam, the thatches are hung down much as canvas would be draped across the ridge-pole of a tent, and extra thatches are shingled downward. This shelter is comparable to a low shed roof without sides ; when finished, it is sufficient to break the rain but not luxurious enough to corrupt its occupants into late sleeping.

Now the roof is up and three small camp cots are placed at one end, with mosquito nets hung over them from the roof above. The remainder of the shelter will accommodate Galpan and the carriers, who will stretch out on their mats of split rattan, and scratch all night. The end near the fire is reserved for them as they do not use mosquito nets and the smudge will help dissipate the insects, although it will not stop the scratching.

The routine of camp-making requires about an hour, depending on how much jungle space there is to be cleared. The same length of time is also the minimum required to clear ground and erect a small tent sufficient only for our own needs.

The camp fire has blazed and settled now to a well-controlled bed of coals, the saucepan of water is bubbling, the coffee boils, something which smells very good is sizzling over the coals.

" Hi, Ma, when do we eat ? "

George's wet hair plasters on his forehead in sleek dabs, his damp shirt sticks to his ribs, his long lean brown legs glisten, his grey-blue eyes squint with wood smoke, and his nostrils spread with the smell of food.

" Right now we eat."

I dish out the menu. Well, anyway, I do know how to cook rice. Here it is, cooked in true Oriental fashion, each grain

separate and flaky and no soggy pudding effect. And over it a tin of bully beef with onions. Now comes the noise of the scraping of enamel plates.

It is only six-thirty, but supper is over and Harry and I are in our cots ready for sleep, and it seems to me that this hour of peace makes it all worth while. It is so sensuously wonderful just to be lying there in a complete negation of all effort, not dragging my feet out of the mud, not keeping up, not smiling pleasantly, not doing my part, scarcely even existing. Surely, nothing can be as good as nothing, I tell myself!

Dawn. I am attending to my own dismal preparations for the day, and leaving George to his father. As far back as I can remember jungle travel, I recall these dawn preparations. First, the struggle to tear myself from the only comfortable spot on the trip, the blankets I sleep between. Not the struggle to awaken, because sleeping has been interrupted by scratching all night as the warmth of the bedding makes the leech bites squirm. Then the pathetic pretence of starting the day clean, with face washing, tooth scrubbing, and the more protracted, maddening attempt to comb out and put up long, straight, dark hair in semi-darkness.

Then the bed to make, folding the blankets, rolling the camp mattress, and stuffing them all in the bag. And then the tidying up, burning cigarette butts and scraps of paper, placing dry shorts and shirt in my knapsack where I can get them as soon as we make camp at night, and collecting the other pair of rubber shoes from the fire where they have been drying, and slinging them in on top of the pack with the cigarettes, the leech repellent and the sketching block.

Now I can take time to look around and breathe deeply of damp, grey, early air, and feel grateful that another day is done, another one begun; I am that much nearer home and still alive. In fact, in spite of complaints, more alive at this painful hour of 5.45 than I have been for some time.

"It's ready, Agnes, the life-giving fluid!"

"Coffee!"

One cup, two cups, three cups . . .

"Ah! Now the lifeblood starts to flow! But—not that I want to be critical at this juncture because, even if it isn't coffee, it's done me a lot of good, but—what is this stuff, Harry?"

"I put eight tablespoons of coffee in the pot, and the rest is water from the jungle stream, the principal ingredient of which is mud. It's boiled to sterility, however."

"The epic of good earth. Well, very excellent mud, anyway. I think I can live now. And the twirp? How does he find himself?"

But the twirp doesn't find himself at all, at dawn ; he takes his sleeping seriously, and the one thing he doesn't approve of in jungle travel is early rising.

The kajang roof is bundled up by now, the beds are folded and in carrying cases, and it is just light enough to travel. The first day has left its mark without yet hardening the victims for the future, and the second day is bound to be the hardest.

The jungle is denser, the rain heavier, mud deeper, the hills more slippery, and feet grow heavier to lift hour by hour. Every leaf bears a leech longing to seek ingress by some sensitive spot, but each man goes doggedly along with the air of a job to be done, and I, without any air at all, spend considerable time in the mud. I see that Harry watches George a little anxiously, but George is O.K. now the dawn has passed.

" Are you all right, old man ? "

" Yes, Dad. More chocolate; please ! "

Harry reaches into the pack. " Not too tired ? "

" I'm fine.! This is fun, isn't it ? "

" Are you getting chilled, George ? "

" No. I'm fine ! I wish we could live like this always !

Tonight we pitch our camp earlier, and the same routine of putting up shelter proceeds, but hampered tonight by heavier rain. Meanwhile Ungib hears barking deer in the distance and gets George's ear, and George gets Harry's.

" My rifle ? . . . My God, George, aren't you ever tired ? "

" No, Dad—this was an easy day ! So, please let us have the rifle ? Ungib and I will get that deer tonight for sure. You'd better have a good hot fire ready to cook it on when we come back."

" Why do you want to go out and kill things, anyway ? "

" Oh . . ." This is not a new idea. " But we need the meat, Dad."

" We don't need it. We have rations."

" But the coolies want meat. Ungib says so. So please can we go, Dad ? "

" The coolies always want meat—especially deer ! Well, all right, go. I suppose it takes time to learn . . ."

" Learn what, Dad ? To hunt ? "

" Learn not to hunt ! "

" Oh . . . Well . . . 'Bye, Dad. We'll get it this time ! "

The shelter is up, the rice is cooked, the camp fire burned to coals, when we hear a deer call, followed by shots. Shortly after, the hunters arrive.

" We've got it. Dad ! We've got it ! Ungib called it by blowing on a leaf, and the deer thought it was another deer and came in our direction, and we shot it ! Oh, look Dad, look Mum ! "

We look, as George dumps on the ground before us a little barking deer, slender, satiny, small-boned with body stiff now and eyes staring in death. George stands triumphantly over it, young, sleek, streamlined and triumphantly alive.

"See, Mum!"

I turn away; he knows what I think.

"See, Dad!"

"Yes, you've got it, George. You've got your deer."

"Well, aren't you pleased about it, Dad?"

"Not very."

"But you used to hunt a lot yourself! Anyhow, *you* brought the gun!"

"I know, George. I brought the gun for emergency. I don't like killing things unnecessarily any more."

The little deer is quickly quartered, and the sweet meat, the equivalent of a fillet steak, is placed in the stew-pot.

Now the stew is served and the meat is so tough it can scarcely be chewed. We make no comment.

"I say, Dad, this deer is good!" says George, chewing madly. "Lucky we got it, wasn't it?"

"Yes, and no." Harry feels his jaw tenderly. "What about a tin of bully beef, Ma? I'm hungry."

"Well—yes. Followed by apricots and cheese?"

"Excellent suggestion!"

"And save this for tomorrow?" asks George.

"Or perhaps you might give what's left to the men. After all, it's the first camp kill."

"O.K."

The coolies hang their portions over the camp fire to smoke it through the night. Next morning they will cut it into small hunks to toss in the bottom of their packs where, in days to come, it will stink worse and worse until it is, by their standards, edible.

As he cuddles into his sleeping-bag George grumbles for the first time, "I wish we didn't have to get up so early tomorrow."

Another day comes, camp is made, and again George and Ungib go hunting. This day no shots are heard, but the two return jubilant in a short time.

"Mum, look what I've got!" George holds up a tortoise a foot across, and grey with jungle mud, and Ungib displays a similar one.

"Aren't they fine? I'm going to keep them and take them home."

"What do you want them at home for? I can't imagine anything less appealing."

"I'm going to breed them and start a tortoise farm."

" What makes you think you have both sexes there ? "

" Ungib says so ! He's an expert on tortoises. This is the female . . . see ? "

Examination.

" Well no, I don't, as a matter of fact ! "

" Well—*that* means she's the female ! Oh, you'll know I'm right when they start to produce babies ! "

" Who's going to carry them home ? "

" Ungib's going to make us a basket out of vines, and we'll carry them."

" We ? That's nice for Ungib ! "

" It's fun, isn't it, to bring something back alive and not shoot it, Mum ? "

" You're getting the idea, eh ? Now, George, you really must get to bed."

" O.K. I'm as good as in ! "

And he's in.

" Mum, Galpan says that our God is really the same as his god, Allah. So perhaps I'll be a Muslim. It's a very good religion except for not eating pork."

Silence from me. The child should be asleep !

" Dad, what is Ungib ? I mean what god does he have ? "

" He's a pagan, and he believes in a god called Kinaringan, and Kinaringan's wife, Munsummundok."

" Does he say prayers to them ? "

" Not exactly, but he makes little offerings to them like a bit of cloth, or tobacco maybe, or anything the gods might like. Now go to sleep ! "

Silence. Then, " Dad, don't you think those tortoises will be nice pets at home ? "

" I think they are ideal travelling-companions ; they neither talk in bed, nor borrow my rifle ! Go to sleep."

All this time we have been travelling the perimeter of a circle about the area where Galpan thinks the caves are located, but the limestone hill has not been found. The area has not been completely exhausted, and Galpan once more says that a week longer would make the search successful. But our rations are consumed, the heavier rains are here, and if we do not return soon to the launch a search party will be sent.

It is the last night in the jungle. For the last time the kajang have been laid, the cots placed, the nets hung, for the last time the coolies have stretched and scratched and smoked and coughed and laughed softly by the fire. For the last time we have cleaned our teeth in the drain and have used the jungle as a latrine, squatting in the rain so as to hurry back to the fire ; we are wet and bitten by mosquitoes.

For the last time as we lie under shelter, the rain comes down in the protective, curtaining, cosy fashion that rain has when you're out of it.

Home in a few nights, I tell myself. And am I glad? I'm supposed to be.

"Well, Mum, are you ever coming again?"

"Haven't made up my mind."

"She never is, but she always does," says Harry.

"Well, Mum? Coming?"

"No."

"But you might change your mind, Mum?"

"Easily."

"Good. Dad and I'll change it for you."

Later still comes George's voice through the drips and rain. "Well, Dad, we didn't find the caves. I guess the Shaitan kept his secret again."

"Yes, George—but maybe it's just as well. You remember what the price of finding the caves was? The sacrifice of the finder's son."

"Dad! You don't believe that, do you?"

"Well—out here in the jungle in the rain, things make sense that don't make sense at home."

* * *

CAVIARE TO THE GENERAL

One other incident about Fyffe's travelling "Gaggie," and which many years later, to his great amusement, I recalled to Will Fyffe. The gaggie shed or theatre was built of wooden partitions and while a glaring oil lamp illuminated the entrance door and pay-box, the rear of the structure was in Cimmerian darkness. It was a dark winter's night; the play was *Hamlet*; a venturesome but impecunious pioneer called Bryce had prised open a board at the rear of the hut and crawled in to a free seat.

He was followed one after another by a hundred or more equally impecunious but anxious patrons of the drama; the play started; the hall was filled; everything was going well until the graveyard scene when Fyffe père stamped angrily on the stage shouting: "Put up them lights!"

When the lights went up the proprietor delivered himself in expostulations thus: "Ladies and gentlemen—and others. This hall tonight is filled to capacity, yet my total drawings are eighteen and sevenpence. How the hell is it done?"

Nobody ventured an answer!

THOMAS JOHNSTON, *Memories*

★*Today a flight over any great city is a part of travel routine. A hundred and seventy years ago, when the Montgolfier brothers in their balloon looked down on Paris from the air for the first time, it was an adventure in aeronautics as reckless and exciting as the conquest of the Sound Barrier.*

UP IN A BALLOON

by

RUPERT SARGENT HOLLAND

IT was in the later half of the eighteenth century that two brothers Joseph and Etienne Montgolfier, who were wealthy paper manufacturers of Annonay in the French province of Auvergne, became interested in balloons. According to one story their attention was directed to this field through having read an account of the experiments of Tiberius Cavallo, an Italian philosopher who was living in England. Cavallo had filled large soap bubbles with " inflammable air," the name that was then given to hydrogen gas, had found that the bubbles so filled floated longer than ordinary soap bubbles, and had published a treatise on the subject.

The Montgolfiers had often observed how clouds hang in the atmosphere and they thought that if a body of vapour or of smoke could be enclosed in a large bag, the bag might be able to lift itself high in air. Cavallo's treatise perhaps first interested them in the use of hydrogen gas, for they tried this in a balloon they constructed of paper. They soon gave up inflammable vapour, however, as it escaped through the pores of the paper almost at once.

Turning their attention to other methods of inflation, they built a small paper balloon with an opening at the bottom and lighted pieces of paper below it. Thereupon the balloon, according to an account of the experiment, " began to distend itself, and in a few minutes sustained itself by being held at its lower part; when, on being released, it ascended to the ceiling of the chamber, where it remained a few minutes, much to the joy and astonishment of its projectors. Moved by this pleasing experiment, they next tried it in the open air. Here again, after it was inflated and released, it ascended, reaching a height of about 70 feet."

The Montgolfiers then constructed a bag of spherical shape and with a capacity of about 600 cubic feet. This balloon, inflated in the same manner as the first, was so powerful that it broke the strings that held it to the ground and rose to a height of some 600 or 700

feet. Next a bigger balloon was built, 35 feet in diameter and with a capacity of 23,000 cubic feet. The experimenters had found that paper alone was incapable of holding the hot air and so they made the envelope of paper lined with fine linen. This balloon was given trial on April 25th, 1783; it ascended to a height of 1,000 feet and travelled almost a mile before it came to the ground.

Delighted with these successes, the Montgolfiers issued invitations to a public exhibition in the market-place of Annonay on June 5th, 1783. There a sceptical crowd of townspeople watched the huge bag distend above a fire of straw and wool that was lighted in a pit under its neck. At a signal the ropes were cast off and—marvel of marvels—the throng saw the balloon rise up and up to a height of 6,000 feet and sail away a mile and a half from the market-place.

Word of the wonderful ascension at Annonay spread far and wide and Etienne Montgolfier was invited to go to Paris, there to lecture before the Royal Academy of Sciences and repeat his balloon demonstrations. For this purpose he built a new balloon, 72 feet high, 41 feet in diameter, and weighing about 1,000 pounds. This he exhibited before the members of the Academy in Paris on September 12th, 1783, and the balloon took up with it a load of between 400 and 500 pounds.

Montgolfier was the hero of the hour. At the royal command he took his balloon, to which he had now attached a small wickerwork basket, to Versailles for a demonstration on September 19th. Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette, with many of their court, were present. In order to test the safety of the balloon for passengers, a sheep, a cock and a duck were placed in the basket. A wooden staging had been built; beneath this a fire was lighted for rarefying the air, and the balloon was placed over an opening in the centre.

When the bag was inflated it was released with its three passengers; up it went to a height of 1,500 feet, stayed in the air for eight minutes, and landed in Vaucresson Wood, about two miles from where it had ascended. The sheep, the cock and the duck arrived on terra firma uninjured and this initial success decided Montgolfier to build a larger and more solidly constructed balloon to carry human passengers.

This new balloon was a gorgeous affair, decorated in blue, with the signs of the Zodiac, the royal cipher and other designs in gold. The opening at the bottom was fifteen feet across and was surrounded by a wickerwork gallery with a balustrade on the outside. In the neck there were holes through which the passengers were to throw bundles of straw on to an iron brazier suspended from the orifice by chains and so replenish the fire in order to renew the hot air and keep the balloon inflated.

François Pilâtre de Rozier, having made several ascents up to 300 feet in "captive" balloons, volunteered to make the first "free" flight. On this first free ascension of human passengers he was accompanied by a friend, the Marquis d'Arlandes. The great event took place on November 21st, 1783, from the Château de la Muette, the residence of the Dauphin. This is the story in the words of the official account:

"Today, November 21st, 1783, at the Château de la Muette (in the Bois de Boulogne) took place an experiment with the aerostatic machine of M. de Montgolfier. The sky was partly clouded, the wind north-west. At 8 minutes after noon a mortar gave notice that the machine was about to be filled. In 8 minutes, notwithstanding the wind, it was ready to set off, the Marquis d'Arlandes and M. Pilâtre de Rozier being in the car.

"It was at first intended to retain the machine awhile with ropes to judge what weight it would bear, and see that all was right. But the wind prevented it rising vertically, and directed it towards one of the garden walls. The ropes made some rents in it, one of six feet long. It was brought down again and in short time was set right. Having been filled again, it set off at 54 minutes past one, carrying the same persons. It rose in the most majestic manner and when it was about 270 feet high, the intrepid voyagers took off their hats, and saluted the spectators. No one could help feeling a mingled sentiment of fear and admiration. The voyagers were soon indistinguishable; but the machine, hovering above the horizon, and displaying the most beautiful figure, rose at least 300 feet high and remained visible all the time. It crossed the Seine below the barrier of La Conférence; and, passing thence between the Ecole Militaire and the Hôtel des Invalides, was in view of all Paris.

"The voyagers, satisfied with this experiment, and not wishing to travel farther, agreed to descend; but seeing that the wind was carrying them upon the houses of the Rue de Sêvres, they preserved their presence of mind, increased the fire, and continued their course through the air till they crossed Paris. They then descended quietly on the plain, beyond the new Boulevard, opposite the Mill of Croulebarbe, without having felt the slightest inconvenience, and having in the car two-thirds of their fuel. They could, then, if they wished, have gone three times as far as they did go, which was 5,000 toises (about $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles), done in from 20 to 25 minutes."

That is the contemporary account of the first authenticated voyage ever made by man through the air.

In making the voyage these first aeronauts frequently threw fuel on the fire to replenish the hot air and keep the balloon from descending. Their adventures were graphically described in a letter written by the Marquis d'Arlandes to a friend.

After relating the incidents of the first part of the trip he says: "I heard a new noise in the machine, which I thought came from the breaking of a cord. I looked in and saw that the southern part was full of round holes, several of them large. I said: 'We must get down.'

"'Why?' (asked Pilâtre de Rozier).

"'Look!' said I.

"At the same time I took my sponge and easily extinguished the fire which was enlarging such of the holes as I could reach, but on trying if the balloon was fast to the lower circle I found it easily came off. I repeated to my companion: 'We must descend.' He looked around him and said, 'We are over Paris.'

"Having looked to the safety of the cords, I said: 'We can cross Paris.' We were now coming near the roofs. We raised the fire and rose again with great ease. I looked under me and saw the Mission Etrangères, and it seemed as if we were going towards the towers of St. Sulpice, which I could see. We rose, and a current turned us south. I saw on my left a wood, which I thought was the Luxembourg. We passed the Boulevard, and I called out: 'Pied à terre!'

"We stopped the fire, but the brave Pilâtre, who did not lose his self-possession, thought we were coming on to some mills and warned me.

"We alighted at the Butte aux Cailles, between the Moulin de Merveilles and the Moulin Vieux. The moment we touched land I held by the car with my two hands. I felt the balloon press my head lightly. I pushed it off and leaped out. Turning towards the balloon, which I had expected to find full, to my great astonishment it was perfectly empty and flattened."

* * *

DE TROP

A determined-looking man strode into a post office, dashed off a telegram, and stamped his foot impatiently while the clerk counted the words. "You've only got eleven words in this telegram," said the clerk. "You are entitled to one more without extra charge."

Together the man and the clerk reread the telegram which went as follows: "Galumph, galumph, galumph, galumph, galumph, galumph, galumph, galumph, galumph, galumph, galumph."

"I can't think of another word to add," said the man.

"Why not another 'Galumph'?" suggested the clerk.

"Another 'Galumph'?" said the man angrily. "That would be silly."

WESTWARD TRAIL

Somewhere out there the future was waiting for her

by MICHAEL FOSTER

THERE is a book-lined room, with a floor painted blue, in an old ranch house. An occasional piece of soft dull Indian silver catches a little light from the crumbling embers in the fireplace; and Navajo rugs are on the blue floor. In a shadowy corner there is a rack of rifles. One of them is lavishly gold-mounted, in old-fashioned elegance, and the gold is worn very smooth from much use, long ago.

In this room at night, when you are a visitor at the ranch, you will hear slow good talk—the sort of talk that once went with the creak of saddle-leather and the jingling of bit-chains, with the crackling of lonely camp fires in the West. And after a while to this drowsy room comes a different sound, from far away. Tonight's coast-bound express is coming through the distant pass. Running down the night, it sends the long cry of its running to die away among the mesas, into the wild hills, under the high Western stars . . .

There was another evening, in the late summer of 1879, when Sally McAusland sat in a trail-weathered tent, brushing her hair with a heavy and expensively monogrammed brush. The camp fire of pinon wood made a gently ebbing light on the canvas walls, but she kept her head turned half away from the entrance of the tent where the flaps were tied back wide open. She kept that side of her face concealed by the veil of her fine, fair hair, because with the slow, waist-long strokes of the brush she was crying silently. And from the pine darkness outside, beyond the camp fire, the Mexican woman was watching again, Indian slanting black eyes shining without any expression at all.

Sally McAusland, sitting on the edge of her camp cot, must weep without anyone knowing it. She was just twenty years old, and not yet a very good manager when it came to her emotions. In everything else she was quietly schooled, as only a New England girl of good family could be. But now, following her husband through the wild harsh country of the Territory of New Mexico, hers was perhaps the most primal fear and loneliness a woman can

have: *There is no home for me any more—not even a friendly place for me to bear my child.*

Leaning in a corner of the tent was her husband's magnificent gold-mounted Winchester rifle, and she looked at it for a long time. Now and again a tear ran down to salt her lips. To her this rifle, although she had seen it used so often on the trail, stood as a symbol—the only one in sight—of the solid richness of the East. For it had been presented to her husband by the Board of Directors of the railway company in token of his great work. The trouble was, she hadn't known that the work was so hard and dangerous and lonely. But grimly letting the last tear dry on her cheek, she knew she would have come with him anyway.

She heard the gravelly crunch of her husband's boots, the slipping and rolling of a loose stone on the steep slope below the tent. He was on his way back from the main camp, where he had been talking with his surveying crew. As he loomed, tall and hurrying at the edge of the firelight, the Mexican woman, Josefina, slipped away into the star-filled night.

He came into the tent, with a handful of papers which were stained by the sweat and dust of the day. Putting them down on the rough blankets of his own cot, he laid his hand gently on Sally's shoulder.

"We'll be breaking camp pretty early in the morning, darling," he said. "The next water is ten miles ahead. You can get that far, can't you?"

"Why, of course, David," she said. Then looking up at his thin anxious face, she said even more clearly: "Please—my dear—don't worry about me."

Suddenly his hand on her shoulder began to tremble, ever so slightly. It was the first sign of weakness she had ever known in him.

"David!" she said sharply. "I'm stronger than you know." She turned her head towards that hand on her shoulder, to kiss it quickly and softly.

He turned away abruptly and picked up his papers again, though the firelight was surely too dim for him to see the writing and figures of those field notes. Sally began braiding her hair, but her grey eyes followed him.

She wished so much that she could share more fully in his work. As chief locating engineer, his job was to find the way for the railway, pushing its main line westwards to the coast. He had to find the straightest possible ways across these hundreds of miles of broken, terrible country; he had to find the easiest possible gradients for the locomotives which soon would follow where his camp fires had burned. And always he must remember that loco-

motives had to have never-failing water within safe distances. Easy gradients for the steel . . . but through this part of the West there was never anything easy for the locator. Sally had seen him lounging in the saddle, looking at a jaggedly upheaved wall of mountains with something like humorous despair in his eyes, but also with a tightening of his stubborn jaw.

Miles behind him and his surveying party were the big brawling camps of pick-and-shovel gangs, teamsters and track-laying crews, toiling to gouge out and scoop together a right of way and lay the steel—to reach the pass. For this was a race for the narrow pass, a race between two rival railway companies; and in little dusty towns, a saloon or two had been wrecked of a Saturday night when gangs from the rival construction camps came drifting in.

Sally finished braiding her hair and sat with hands folded, like birds at rest, while David methodically put the papers away in his carrying-desk of battered mahogany.

"I've just been talking to the two boys I sent spying," he said casually. "They're back. They came back an hour ago. From what they say, we're ahead of Gig O'Meara and his crew—ahead, but only by a margin of four or five days' work. I . . . wonder about Gig."

His voice had an odd quality; grim—and somehow wistful. Gig O'Meara was the locating engineer for the Rio Bravo and Coast, the rival railway company. And once he had been David's best friend. They had been together on a Union Pacific surveying crew when David was a boy. One hot afternoon of dust and sun Gig had saved David's life, when two half-breed renegades with rifles had found him bending over his account-books in the payroll car on a new siding. Gig just happened to saunter in, and David said he had never heard two revolver shots so close together as Gig's shooting, fanning the hammer of his .45. Gig was older than David; a harsh laughing fighter, merry in battle, but a friend with sad Irish gentleness in his eyes . . . Sally waited while David snapped shut the dull brass clasps of his travelling-desk.

"I guess Gig is scouting us, too," he said. "One of the boys at noon today found the marks of shod horses, three of them, on a hill above us. The marks were fresh. Not an hour old."

"Just where is O'Meara now, with his surveying crew?" Sally asked. "What did our riders report tonight about them?"

"They're travelling in a line parallel to us twenty miles to the south, but through even rougher country. That's why we're ahead," David said. After a long pause he added: "Their line of survey will *have* to converge with ours somewhere under Ghost Mesa. It's the only way into the pass."

While David closed the flaps of their sleeping-tent, shutting them in alone together in dim golden radiance, Sally loosened her stays and reached for the prim, high-necked, long-sleeved night-gown which lay folded on her pillow.

After a time, with David kneeling beside her cot and his sandy head resting on the curve of her arm, she said: "I'm only an extra burden to you, David, here on the trail. I'm only a liability to you. And I've wanted so terribly to be a help to you."

"What dear solemn foolishness she talks! You are my greatest help. Just by being you, and being here," he murmured. "Hush now, darling, and think about sleep."

She sighed, fighting down the panic which rose in her throat. She knew that there was no retreat now. The time was weeks past when he could have taken her back to the railhead and sent her East. It was too late now, too late to risk—and there was no place to leave her in the little sun-baked adobe towns behind them. No safe place for her to bear her child. They were away in the wild land now, and her child must be born somewhere under the open sky.

"David," she said, "you love this country, don't you?"

"Yes," he said slowly, "more than any I have ever seen, I think. I don't quite know why. I wish you would see it, and tell me why. It's something deep within me, this country. If you could only sense it too, and tell me. You understand things so . . . so imaginatively, when you want to."

"It's a strange country." She turned her face away. "Too strange. It's . . . soaked in history, but not our history. Old, old, and cruel. I've—I've never been afraid before in my life."

"I'm here," he said quietly. "Maybe just a plain practical-minded engineer isn't a bad fellow to have around sometimes."

"Kiss me goodnight now," she whispered. "Practical-minded? Oh David, David—when the trains come through it will be because a dreamer with a rifle was here before them."

"Dreamer yourself," he mumbled uncomfortably. "But with a greater courage than I have, Sally, mine is easy—I think you're remembering the way your great-great-great-grandfather Daniel was born."

"Well, it does help to remember it from time to time," she said. A remote Puritan girl, an ancestress in a dark old portrait hanging in the parlour at home, had borne her first child in a corner of a block-house. With wisps of black-powder smoke blowing past her. With the snows of the New World stretching away across a continent, and Indians coming out of the black wall of timber . . .

"Our child will be like that too," David said softly; but she could hear the dry click of fear in his throat, as in her own. "And

the steel will come, and the big freights, and the new towns, and all the people, and none of them will ever know. That's the way it should be."

They found each other's lips half-smiling in the gathering darkness.

Lying awake long after the slow breathing from the other cot told her that David was asleep, Sally had a moment of wifely amusement, thinking of his embarrassment at being called a dreamer. Because in spite of his concise pages of figures and estimates, that's what he was. Incurably. It was the first thing she had ever thought about him. That was two years ago: he had come to Boston between surveying jobs to give a series of lectures at Harvard University on engineering problems in the West. Her father, being on the Board of Directors of the railway company, had invited David to the family's old brick house of time-shadowed rooms.

In the West he had outgrown the frock coat of his student days, and he hadn't bothered to buy another one, so that his big sunburned wrists stuck too far out of the tight sleeves. Sally thought he was an awkward young man, brusque with shyness. Until suddenly, that first evening in the parlour, she found herself caught by his light blue eyes which were very clear from looking into great distances.

She was eighteen then; and during the year that they were engaged to be married, while he was away, running a line through the Rockies, she studied Spanish from books because she knew of the tremendous job ahead of him through the South-west, and she meant to do her part in that trail-living and that work. And tonight in the tent she went to sleep still thinking with all her Puritan conscience of how she had turned out to be more a hindrance than a help. She even feared this land which he loved so much.

In the early sun next morning, she watched David on horseback leading his cavalcade of engineers and equipment-laden pack horses away to the westward: leading the way into an immense tract of country which slanted towards the sky. She followed slowly, perched on the high, lurching seat of a waggon with Josefina, the Mexican woman, driving the team. Sally could no longer ride a horse, and when the waggon's jolting got too rough she got down and walked. When that happened, the Mexican packers with their camp-laden horses would catch up with her and pass her, the feet and hooves plodding up spurts of dust which, for a little while, drifted shining in the sun.

But when she was riding, sitting on the folded lambskins which cushioned the waggon seat, she was uncomfortable with Josefina beside her. A strange, silent woman, very dark, probably more than

half Indian. David had heard of her in a little town lost and drowsing in the hills. He had sent his head Mexican packer, a venerable man of profound courtesy, to find her. Two days later the Mexican had brought her into camp to see David; and after a conference in which money was delicately mentioned, she agreed to come along. To be with Sally, and to be nurse to the baby afterwards. Throughout this country Josefina was famous as an expert in these matters. She was a woman of perhaps forty. Sally did not know whether she was good or evil.

For ten days now, Josefina had been watching this woman and this man who had asked her help. Watching . . . watching with secret thoughts, and her Indian-sloe eyes had neither friendship nor pity nor dislike. Nothing.

So it was all the more surprising when in the middle of that morning Josefina said: "You are afraid. Verdad!—for true!"

Startled, Sally felt herself shrinking away with all the cool stiffness of her heritage—generations of ladies in sedate parlours. Unconsciously, she even drew her wide grey skirts more closely to herself on the waggon seat as it sagged to one side and then rose with a groan of the axles. Odd shadows deepened at the corners of Josefina's lips.

"The loneliness of women, at this time—the great loneliness," Josefina said. "No one else can share that. Indeed, we women are alone then."

The waggon careered laboriously along. The wheels made soft rumbling sounds in a patch of sand.

After a silence, Josefina said: "See. Before us, and on all sides of us. This is strong and ancient country, so the Indians say."

In spite of herself, Sally looked. On one side were the high, forest-secret folds of the pinon hills; but ahead were two great mesas, immensely distant, their flat tops making ruler-straight lines above the tumbled far horizon. One mesa was Indian-paint red, but the mesa beyond was deep cobalt blue in cloud shadow.

Josefina said: "It may be that this silent country through which we pass has gifts that it can give you. It may be. If you can receive. I do not know."

It was as if for many days she had been making up her mind to speak of this.

Sally glanced sideways at her, almost shyly. In a way, she knew what Josefina was talking about—but where Josefina was seeing these things out of racial memories, out of the heart, Sally had only the dry pages of history books, through which to try to understand. She knew that this land which in its immensity had indifferently absorbed the little pools of blood of so many mortal races in unknown wars; which in its vast silence had absorbed their brave sad songs,

and all their boastings—this land could not be contained in pages of words. Here had come the Conquistadors, in weather-rusted mail of Spanish steel. They had not found their golden cities, but they had found sun-crumbled cliff cities of the old races, lost in immemorial time, which even their Indian slaves could not explain except in legends, except in dream-words. Sally knew all that from history books: and she knew that these were haunted hills. Haunted by Time, by the evil and the hopes and the bravery of men.

"Yes," Sally said. "I know, Josefina."

The waggon jolted on, for many slow-plodding dusty steps under the hooves of the team.

Josefina said: "See, a little dust blows and settles. Glittering in this day's sun. It is the same dust that covers the places of the Old Ones in the hills; the lost places of the vanished peoples. Men and women they were, too, those Old Ones in this land."

Sally thought: *And after we pass, Time creeps down again from their hills . . . It will always be the same, the comings and the deaths of races have not changed it much, and neither can we. But I, like other women before me, unknown now and forgotten as I shall be, I am bringing one more new life to this sky and to this time.*

That night in the ebbing light inside their tent she tried to tell David. And she could not. On a doubtful hesitant word she fell silent, and left him puzzled. There were no words for this: only a deep and silent knowledge that comes perhaps only to women.

So they went on, for five camps. To the West, towards the pass. David now had night-guards all round the camp, just in case; and their scouting riders told him that Gig O'Meara was posting his camp the same way. Rifles, and sweat, and the dreams of men . . . they meant less and less to Sally. She was facing now a different frontier from theirs.

And yet this deep-dreaming harsh land was somehow beginning to be a part of it too, for her. Almost unwillingly at first, she began seeing this country and its blanket of time through the eyes of Josefina—those strange, rapt, withdrawn eyes.

Very late one afternoon, when the long shadow of Ghost Mesa was coming to meet them, Josefina said: "For courage I will try to tell you something. But first, look up at the mesa, which will be there forever, as other women before you have lifted up their eyes in their trouble. Let the strong Indian sun touch your face, before this day closes. It is good, the Indian sun, and very old."

Pushing back the embroidered rim of her bonnet, Sally said in her book-Spanish: "For courage, Josefina, you have told me much already."

On the high-swaying waggon seat, Sally stared at the country ahead, which was wild and empty. Somewhere out there, the first great test of her new womanhood was waiting for her. Desperately, in defiance of fear, she made herself think about the child rather than herself.

Josefina absent-mindedly slapped the reins on the slow-walking horses. " Since you are far from your home, you must accept more ancient and less gentle things. I speak of the strength of this land and this sun, for your need. I myself am a devout woman—I do not think that this is altogether a heathen thought. Besides, it is late in the day, when talk is loosened. In my town, women go now to the blue-painted well, and they talk. Piety I have always with me, especially towards midnight. But Indian gifts are to be taken under the broad sky."

Knowing it would please her, Sally said courteously : " We are not Indians, you and I."

" The country is Indian," Josefina said. " Its gifts are harsh, but very brave. To the open heart, which can receive them. We walk among the mysteries of many yesterdays."

Sally shivered, but with her civilized mind could smile faintly at such pagan auspices for a respectable New England baby.

Josefina's brown fingers tightened nervously on the reins. " Soon we come to the little river which flows at the feet of the mesa, with the pass beyond." Though she would not have admitted it, Josefina's voice became pure Indian, prophesying. " Like others who have been here, and who were women as you are—like them, like Indian women, you may soon need to remember any courage that you can."

That night in camp Sally did not try to tell David any of this. With his arms round her, he was very quiet, very still, with worries of his own.

" What is it, David ? " she said. " Is it Gig O'Meara ? "

" Well," he said, " his line of survey will have to converge with mine on these flats between the river and the foot of the mesa. We're still ahead, but I've got to drive the work like hell for the pass. This is a rotten time for you, Sally."

" Never mind about me. I'm all right," she said. " You get to the pass, and hold it. We'll hold it until the railhead comes up." She was proud of herself for talking the railway language. The law concerning the filing of plats was all very well, as David had explained it to her, but already she had been in the West long enough to know that possession of the ground was a good deal more important for immediate practical purposes. It was man to man here, and let the lawyers fight through litigations in courts for years afterwards. As a matter of fact, both railway companies had

already filed plats for the line through the pass, and both their railheads were, through all these weeks, toiling towards it along the newly surveyed and converging lines of approach.

"Forget about me," Sally said. "I'll do the family part of the worrying. You haven't got enough family to worry about—not quite yet."

They both laughed, a bit shakily, and fumbled for each other's hands in the darkness. She could say careless-sounding words for David, but the terror was with her again in the night. For all her brave thoughts, she knew silently and humbly that she had not proved herself yet.

But before she went to sleep, from somewhere far away, she heard the long cry of a timber wolf—deep, almost bass, a far-travelling loneliness. It was some old grey lobo, high up under the mesa's rim, the very voice of that lost land. The land from which she must draw courage. She did not know when fading into dream her fingers slipped away from David's.

It was still dark when she woke, but she could smell good black camp-coffee and pinon smoke. While she was dressing, fastening the hooks and eyes of her bodice, David brought her a steaming cup, and after a while they went out and had breakfast under the morning star. The Mexican packers were already breaking camp, many vague figures hurrying and tents collapsing; and David left her when the east began to have the unearthly green, infinitely clear, of that high country's dawn. Sally was folding her nightgown into her travelling-case when Josefina drove up with the team and waggon. As they jolted out on the trail the sun was just rising behind them in cold long splinters of light.

The going was rough that morning through the scrub along the river, and Sally had to walk nearly all the way. On her left rose the high rough wall of the mesa, with the great slides at its base sometimes reaching almost down to the river. But the trail twisted round many of its buttresses of bare rock. Sally had to stop sometimes, to rest a little. So the Mexicans with their pack horses were a mile or so ahead and out of sight, when about ten o'clock David came riding back to find her. He swung down from the saddle and his horse dropped its head, blowing after a hard gallop. The gold-mounted butt of the rifle, where it showed above the saddle-scabbard, caught a hot gleam of sun.

Gently David put his arm round her. "Such a dusty tired girl," he said. "I've been so anxious about you. I just had to ride back to make sure you were all right."

Tactfully, Josefina was driving the waggon on for a few yards and then reining in the team.

" I'm all right," Sally said. " You shouldn't bother about me. The work—"

" I left the boys running an easy gradient, before the big curve starts, up into the pass," he said. " But I can't stay long. I—"

The horse's head had come up suddenly, with pointed ears, and he turned, moving with a few uneasy steps, looking in the direction from which they had come. Just here, there was one of the sharp shoulders of rock round which the waggon had laboured, with Sally walking. So they couldn't see what was catching up with them ; but they heard the half-sounds, muffled in the trail's soft dust, of another horse coming at an easy walk. David started for his rifle, now ten feet away and on the other side of his saddle, but it was too late. They hadn't heard in time.

A single horseman had appeared around the rock shoulder. David stopped, the rifle still just out of reach.

" Hello, Gig," he said.

" Hello, David," Gig said, but his hand had dropped casually to rest on the butt of the .45 at his hip.

His big Irish face still looked surprised. He hadn't expected to come suddenly upon the waggon so far behind—and David with it. The shelf of land was very narrow here, between the rock-face and the river, and its steeply sloping bank was ten or twelve feet high, above the spray-wet boulders in the stream below. Gig was riding a powerful bright bay horse, but to Sally's horrified eyes its satiny coat was dark against the hurrying sunlit waters as Gig paced it slowly forward, between them and the river, with his hand so negligently on the butt of his six-shooter. His battered fighter's face smiled gently upon David. The gold-mounted rifle, on the other side of the horse, was deep in its scabbard, and David wore no revolver. Josefina had turned round on the waggon seat to watch impassively.

" How're you doing, Gig ? " David said.

" Oh, fine," Gig said. " Just fine, David. So fine indeed that you aren't going to hold the pass against me."

Sally, recognizing the scarred charm in his Irish voice, knew why David had always loved this older and tougher man. And then Sally realized something else. These two men facing each other were both sick at heart, because they were friends, and there was nothing left for them but murderous duty.

Abruptly and secretly, Sally gave David's horse a backward punch with her elbow. It moved away a few steps and then looked back.

Neither man noticed. They were gazing straight into each other's eyes. " I'll see you in hell, Gig," David was saying quietly. " What are you going to do ? "

Sadly, Gig's eyes contracted as his hand tightened on the butt of his .45. But Sally was walking after David's horse with her hand outstretched as if to take him by the bit and hold him still.

" David, I've got you," Gig said softly. " Your work's finished, here."

Sally was edging step by small step round David's horse.

" I won't shoot unless you make me, David." Gig's voice was almost pleading, but careful with deadliness. " It's better for you and me to have it out, here and now, than for maybe a lot of good men to get killed later on in a pitched battle at the pass. And I've got the gun on you now, David."

" Go ahead and use it," David said briefly.

" Well, stand where you are, and don't make me shoot," Gig said, a bit more carefully. " We're going to bargain, David. Both our crews would fight for this pass, and I don't want that to happen because I don't know who would win. But I've won here, where it's just the two of us.

" Of course, now, if you should force me to shoot, there would still be a battle at the pass and that would be too bad because a lot of our boys would still get killed. So listen to reason, son. There's the other pass, the south pass away down yonder, left for you. I know it's a bad one. But that's our bargain, David—with other lives for you to think about, besides your own. But right now it's you and me. You take the south pass. I . . . advise it."

On the far side of David's horse, Sally's hands had reached the rifle. It was awkward to get it out of the scabbard because both horses were moving restlessly as if sensing trouble. But as David started for Gig O'Meara with loosely-swinging empty hands, the long beautiful barrel of the rifle came up. The gold mounting of the stock was warm against Sally's cheek.

" Stop. Both of you," she said clearly. And Gig O'Meara turned his head to look at her.

" Hey ! " he said. Half-laughing, he humorously waved both his hands. " I won't fight a woman. Come on, David, call her off."

" Sally ! " David said. " Don't—"

" But I'm going to shoot," Sally said.

" Sally ! Put down that gun ! " David's voice cracked in an agony of fear for her. " You don't know—"

" But I do," Sally said. " Be quiet, David, dear."

On the bead of the rifle's front sight, she was watching Gig O'Meara's face. On that hard face she saw suddenly dawning his knowledge of a terribly real danger.

He was backing his horse, half-rearing it for his own protection—and then all the rest of it happened so quickly that it was only a whirling of blurred pictures to Sally. But the bead of the rifle

held steady. Gig's big red horse rearing, waltzed backwards, one hind hoof going over the edge of the crumbling bank—clawing in air for a moment, trying to find earth again, and instantly, horse and man twisted slowly toppling over sideways and backwards out of sight with a great falling sprawl of legs. There was a deep-jolted thud of blown breath from the horse, and then a sliding of loose rocks and soil, a thunderous splash in the river. Some dust rose, and drifted gently away. Sally lowered the rifle.

David went down the bank, his boots ploughing and clattering in haste. Gig was lying with his head and shoulders in the water, unconscious. Half-buried by a little avalanche of earth, one of his legs seemed doubled queerly. His big bay horse was wading out towards mid-stream, the stirrups dangling and a wet leather saddle-bag slapping against his side. David hauled Gig's head and shoulders out of water, looked at his face, and then picked him up and started towards a gravel bar downstream where there was no bank. Gig's horse hesitated with walling eyes, and then followed. Sally and Josefina with the waggon reached the gravel bar before David; between them they got Gig up on to the waggon-bed and lying on a hurriedly spread out tarpaulin.

" He's just knocked out," David said. " But his leg's broken."

" That I can care for," Josefina said. " It is my profession. Think, though. His men, though it may be only some of them, will arrive soon behind him. They will overtake us and find him in this waggon."

With a faraway, pleased look in his blue eyes, David had his arm inside the wet saddle-bag on Gig's horse. After groping around, he pulled out a leather-bound ledger. It was soaked, and he didn't try to open the pages. David smiled. " I know the way Gig works. This, dear Sally, will be his detailed estimates on cuts, fills, and trestle-work for the last forty or fifty miles of his survey. Gig would never trust these to anyone else, not to any of his men. The old boy said a while ago that he'd got me. Well, I guess we've got him now. Thanks to you, Sally."

" I know a safe place," Josefina said urgently. " Quick, across the river. It is a place I know, where they will not find us. The water will lose our tracks, but you, Senor McAusland, can find them on the other side and follow us later. You go now to your men, before you are caught again, with the book, the book which is of importance. The injured man here, he will be safe with me." Grimly, she reached for Gig's holster and slung the gun far out into the river.

Looking at Sally, David's eyes became bleak with anxiety. " Darling," he said, " I can't let you —"

" David ! " she said quietly. " I'm a part of this now. And

I'll carry my part through. You get back to yours, right now!"

David bit his lip, but then bowed his head to kiss her. Laughing, she pushed him towards his horse.

After he had ridden away, leading Gig's horse, Sally and Josefina turned to the river. The waggon team was nervous. With a woman walking beside the head of each horse, holding tightly to each bit, the team and the slow-rumbling waggon were led down into the river and together, they went splashing and floundering out across the swift shallow water. Its icy weight dragged at the women's thick skirts, swirling them out sideways.

They hauled out on an opposite gravel bar, and Josefina hastily climbed up over a waggon wheel and took the reins. Sally walked. It was a long way, through scrub. Sally's wet skirts flapped dismally at her ankles. Soon the wetness was so caked with dust that they didn't flap any more. After about a mile, Gig groaned. Sally peered over the side of the waggon.

"Well," Gig said, "this is a come-down for me. Where's David?"

"He's gone back to work," Sally said. "And you mustn't worry about your book of estimates. It's perfectly safe."

Gig groaned again. "I might have known it," he said. "How do you do, Mrs. McAusland." His sad, tired fighter's eyes managed the smile of a friend, for Sally. With a deep, resigned sigh he closed them again and Sally trudged on.

Through those miles, while she walked, Sally found something which would remain with her all the rest of the days and the nights of her life. It was the stern self-discipline, so often misunderstood, of women who had gone quiet-faced about their household duties while their men went to battle or were at sea. Those women. If they had tears, it was for the lonely midnight pillow behind a locked door. Freedom was built on that silence. Dimly, even then, Sally knew that with these arid miles she had left girlhood: and she was now with those strong women whose past she could carry on. They, too, had had to draw their courage from loving a man who needed them.

Josefina turned the team into a narrow canyon. After a few hundred yards the team stopped abruptly. Josefina was pointing to a cluster of ruined cliff-dwellings high up under the canyon's rim.

"It is one of the places of the Old Ones," Josefina said.

They tied the team in a clump of trees. Josefina got Sally's blankets and a lantern out of the waggon. It took her a long time to help Sally up the steep trail, worn smooth in solid rock by feet centuries ago. After the last slow climb they came to a crumbling

terrace of masonry. A moment later they were inside a room which was ruined by the suns of centuries and looted by their winds. Here in this dry and bitter dust Josefina spread the blankets and Sally lay down. Then the Mexican woman went back down the trail. Once, while she was gone, a sickly musky smell crept into the room and Sally knew that a rattlesnake was near ; but gradually the odour faded away. After that, Josefina seemed to be coming and going many times, bringing armloads of pinon wood, and some time later there was a fire, in the ancient smoked place in a corner of the room.

It was hours later when Sally woke again, and Josefina was crouched dozing by the fire.

" How is O'Meara, down in the waggon ? " Sally asked.

" He is all right," Josefina said. " He curses much, but he is all right."

The sun failed early that afternoon. Tremendous clouds were banking up. Josefina was renewing the fire when they heard David's voice calling Sally from the canyon. When he came up the foot-trail and stood looking down at her, his face was white under its tan.

"Darling—I'm glad you're resting," he said. " And Gig says he'll take the south pass. He says he knows when to be practical." David grinned.

" It will cost him a hundred and nine extra miles, and heavy gradients. But he's a good old Gig—without a gun. And he always keeps his word. He asked me to tell you that if he had to lose, he was glad it was Sally McAusland who won."

She remembered David kissing her. She remembered Josefina motioning him away. But it must have been a long while later when the black waves of agony stopped for a little while and left her clear-headed again.

For a long time she must have been withdrawn into her own secret and instinctive self, in the way women must learn—far, far beyond the sound of men's voices. It must have been a long time, because now it was evening, and Josefina was kneeling beside her, and through the door she could see the great thunder-heads coming up over the peaks, over the mesas. They stood in folds of cloud-white and massive black. And in the rolling thunder-storm over the desert, the ancient gods of this land were talking. They spoke in thunder now ; but in the gentle rains upon this land of theirs and in the deep-lying snows of winter, she thought, they knew the centuries—the centuries of birth and death, those twin mysteries.

With her clear mind, Sally wondered if every woman did not recede a little into the primitive when facing this. All she knew,

looking up into Josefina's dark and secret face, which was smiling faintly—all Sally knew was that she was being helped through the most primitive thing of all . . . helped through by the Primitive, whose slow dreams began the world.

Some day she would try to tell David what brought her through. But now she thought: *Here my child will be born. In this land my child will live, for when all the work is done we will come back. This is our future.*

The lighted lantern on a stone ledge was blowing in a great wind.

Tonight, the coast-bound express leans smoothly on a long climbing curve. In every Pullman, the narrow gleaming corridor outside the row of compartment doors begins to tilt perceptibly upward; and all the comfortable people feel the drag of diminishing speed, for even this great train is slowed a little by the gradient which leads into the pass. Perhaps none of them knows how the pass was won, long ago.

Away up ahead, a big diesel-electric locomotive is leading the way into an immense stretch of American country which is slanted towards the sky of desert stars. And its lonely running cry echoes back, echoes into the hills, and is lost.

After the train has passed, a little dust blows and settles, in the night. The dust that covers the places of the Old Ones in the canyons. Time creeps down again from their hills.

And in the blue-floored library of the ranch house, the talk pauses. John McAusland, a gaunt old power of a man, a born Westerner, is looking at the pinon embers in the fireplace. With him, you are listening to that long fading cry in the wild hills. Then someone, maybe one of his sons or a granddaughter or one of his guests, lights a cigarette, and the slow talk begins again.

* * *

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

Once, long ago, I went to Fiume and in the ship met an Italian journalist who had marched with d'Annunzio's Arditi. On the wooded shore he pointed to places that were mapped for ever in his gallant memories.

"There, and there," he announced in a voice that curdled thought, "we left blood and hair!"

"Was there much opposition?" I asked.

Magnificently he smacked his chest, threw out his right arm in a splendid gesture. "There was *no* opposition!"

ERIC LINKLATER, *A Year of Space*

TALL STORY

'Tis a tale was undoubtedly true
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang

ANDREW LANG

A refugee officer, who lived to a great age at Bristol, under the title of Capitaine Calamité, took great delight in recounting to his younger neighbours the misfortunes of his early years. His favourite tale was that of his captivity at Algiers. His stature, it must be observed, was singularly diminutive, and his strength of body small in proportion. To such a one no severe tasks of labour could be assigned, even by the most barbarous taskmaster. What then were the cruelties he had to relate?

"I was treated like a brute animal. They could not make me drag heavy stones; they made me then—they made me sit, day after day, and night after night, in one cruel constrained posture—to hatch turkeys!"

From Recreative Review, 1822

Sycophant

The laughter of the lesser Lynx
Is often insincere:
It pays to be polite, he thinks,
If Royalty is near.

So when the Lion steals his food
Or kicks him from behind
He smiles, of course—but oh, the rude
Remarks that cross his mind!

E. V. RIEU, *Cuckoo Calling*

Happy Thyme

They called him Ferdinand the Fierce and all the Bandilleros were afraid of him and the Picadores were afraid of him and the Matador was scared stiff.

Ferdinand ran to the middle of the ring and everyone shouted and clapped because they thought he was going to fight fiercely and butt and snort and stick his horns around. But not Ferdinand. When he got to the middle of the ring he saw the flowers in all the lovely ladies' hair and he just sat down and smelled.

He wouldn't fight and be fierce no matter what they did. He just sat and smelled. And the Bandilleros were angry and the Picadores were angrier and the Matador was so angry he cried because he couldn't show off his cape and sword.

So they had to take Ferdinand home. And for all I know he is sitting there still, under his favourite cork tree, smelling the flowers just quietly.

He is very happy.

MUNRO LEAF, *The Story of Ferdinand*

Ah, 'Twas Long Ago

I am the Tiger's confidant,
and never mention names :
the Lion drops the formal "Sir,"
and lets me call him "James."

Into my ear the blushing Whale
stammers his love. I know
why the Rhinoceros is sad,
—ah, child! 'twas long ago.

I am akin to all the Earth
by many a tribal sign,
the aged Pig will often wear
that sad, sweet smile of mine.

My niece, the Barnacle, has got
my piercing eyes of black :
the Elephant has got my nose,
I do not want it back . . .

G. K. CHESTERTON

April Fools

In March, 1860, a vast multitude of people received through the post a card having the following inscription, with a seal marked by an inverted sixpence at one of the angles, thus having to superficial observation an official appearance : "Tower of London.—Admit the Bearer and Friend to view the Annual Ceremony of Washing the White Lions, on Sunday, April 1st, 1860. Admitted only at the White Gate. It is particularly requested that no gratuities be given to the Wardens or their Assistants."

The trick is said to have been highly successful. Cabs were rattling about Tower Hill all that Sunday morning, vainly endeavouring to discover the White Gate.

R. CHAMBERS

Catastrophe

Sally, having swallowed cheese,
Directs down holes the scented breeze,
Enticing thus with baited breath
Nice mice to an untimely death.

GEOFFREY TAYLOR

Nightjar !

When Gregory of Montelongo lived at Ferrara he had a raven which he used to pledge for a large sum, always redeeming it faithfully when he had enough money. For this bird talked like a man and was an excellent jester. He would get up in the middle of the night and fetch travellers out of the inns. This he did by crying out, " Who's for Bologna ? Who's for Dojolo ? Who's for Peola ? Come along, then ! Make haste ! Bring your baggage. Time to go. To the boat—to the boat ! "

And so newly-arrived travellers, to whom this wily bird was a stranger, would get out of their beds and carry their baggage to the river. Then they would sit on the bank for the rest of the night . . .

FRA SALIMBENE, *Chronica*, 1233,
translated by Arthur Stanley

The Microbe

The Microbe is so very small
You cannot make him out at all,
But many sanguine people hope
To see him through a microscope.
His jointed tongue that lies beneath
A hundred curious rows of teeth ;
His seven tufted tails with lots
Of lovely pink and purple spots
On each of which a pattern stands,
Composed of forty separate bands ;
His eyebrows of a tender green ;
All these have never yet been seen—
But Scientists, who ought to know,
Assure us that they must be so . . .
Oh ! let us never, never doubt
What nobody is sure about !

HILAIRE BELLOC

COLLECTOR'S PIECE

"Jade," he said, "—even the word is beautiful, though for me, of course, fatal"

by JOHN INGLIS HALL

I WAS dusting the contents of the great glass showcase of jades which used to stand to the right of the main door of the department store in which I once worked. It was the favourite case, the favourite morning task of that faintly remembered stranger—myself at twenty. My care for the jades was almost a refinement of my neglect of my other responsibilities.

Suddenly, a quiet male voice behind me said: "Young man, I've been watching you. I see you love jade."

I turned round, holding a piece in my hand, and smiled. "Yes," I said. "Can I help you?"

The newcomer was old and straight. He wore an Edwardian suit with a long jacket, and his hair was white and fluffed out round his head, like a halo. His nose was thin and hooked, with magnificent, arched nostrils. The one thing which completely spoiled his face was his mouth. It was weak and self-indulgent. His whole expression betrayed a bitter knowledge of the limitations of the human spirit, and the bounds which are set to achievement.

"Help me? Yes indeed," he said. "I came in yesterday and realized that you have one of the best collections of jade I have seen in London. Do you buy much jade today?"

"As much as we can get," I replied. "Not much good jade comes on the market, as you know. When we hear of any collections being sold, we generally buy if we can."

"You personally?" he asked. "Forgive me! You seem very young to possess such judgment."

"My grandfather was Nairn Callard who bought one of the most valuable collections," I said diffidently. "Of course I'm not as good as he was, but they send me to make first appraisals, and if I think there is anything good, the head buyer goes and bids for it."

He raised his eyebrows and nodded his head. "I see. I knew Callard in the old days—a great expert. I'm glad to meet you—Mr. Callard, is it? . . . I'm glad you bear the name! You might like to come up to my house and look over my collection. I'm

getting old, you see, and bit by bit I'm selling out. My jade is my capital."

"I'd be glad, of course, Mr. . . . ?"

"Brandon, Roger Brandon. Here's my card."

I took it and looked at the old-fashioned engraved lettering—I have the card still—*Mr. Roger Standish Brandon, Heckmanswyke Old Hall, Heckmanswyke, near Manchester.*

"Write to me if your buyer is interested," he said, shaking me by the hand.

"By the way, if you come, you won't mind if I make two conditions? It's my pride, I suppose! You must tell nobody except your buyer that I am selling my collection. Also, whoever completes the purchase, if we do business, must draw the money and pay me in cash. Thank you, Mr. Callard! So nice to have met you. Good-bye!"

Three weeks later, I was travelling by train to Manchester, empowered to buy up to a thousand pounds' worth of Roger Brandon's jade, if what he had was good. At London Road Station, a vintage Rolls in perfect condition, driven by an elderly chauffeur in dark grey livery, met me. His service and courtesy were perfect, but like many old-style servants he was infinitely remote. He made me feel uncomfortable and pampered as he tucked a rug of leopard-skin mounted on red broadcloth round my knees.

Heckmanswyke proved to be fifteen miles outside Manchester. We drove there in dignified, high-seated majesty, in purring silence. The horn of the car was like a solemn fog-signal from a well-bred ship in no real danger, to all other decorous ships around it.

At the door of Heckmanswyke Old Hall, a butler of the same smiling, silent-footed, distant breed as the chauffeur received me with perfect attention, but made me feel small. He took me straight to Roger Brandon in his study. The house was Elizabethan, the study oak-beamed, and a fragrant fire of pine-logs burned in the hearth.

Brandon received me like an old friend. Ten minutes after my arrival, he set out on a brilliantly polished oak table a dozen or fifteen of the finest jades I had ever seen in my life. They sat among their reflections as though mirrored in a still pool.

The old man had talked about nothing but jade since I came in, but there was something wild about his talk. It was as though he both loved and hated his subject, and could not choose but speak of it. Now we began to appraise and handle the pieces. He spoke excitedly, almost feverishly.

"Ah, jade, jade," he kept repeating. "Even the word is beautiful—though, for me, of course, fatal . . ."

He did not give me time to ask him why. Then, all at once, he took me by the arm and said: "You know the famous Chinese saying about jade?

"*Jade, fairest of stones, endowed with the five virtues—charity in its lustre, bright yet warm; rectitude in its translucency, revealing the colours within; wisdom in the purity and penetrating quality of its note; courage in that it may be broken but not bent; equity in that it has sharp edges yet injures none.*"

I felt that he was sounding me, trying to detect the extent of my capacity for æsthetic appreciation—or even whether I knew my subject at all—and I was on my mettle.

"I don't know the quotation," I said, "but it explains why, ever since I began to handle jade, I have obtained more from it than from any other substance. It speaks to me through my fingers. I seem to know the good from the bad by just touching it."

Brandon smiled and nodded, but his smile had no warmth in it.

"Probably," he said curtly. "It has been precious and revered in China for so long." He sighed. "Jade for me, on the contrary, has been like a terrible mistress. For it I have been ruthless, as a man sometimes is to get a woman."

He leant across the table and passed me an exquisite white "mutton fat" jade figurine of a woman, about eight inches high.

"What do you think of this?" he asked. "I'd be interested to have your opinion."

"Ah, now I'm really on trial," I thought as I took it from him, but I saw at once that this one was easy.

"Chien Lung," I said after a decent interval. "About the third decade of his reign, I should think. A perfect formal eighteenth-century piece. I prefer earlier jades, but this is perfect of its kind—the sort of thing we are glad to buy . . ."

I stopped, for I was still young enough to wait smugly for a pat on the back for being right. It was disconcerting to receive none.

"You will like T'ang, then?" he asked next, handing me a small brown jade cicada, sitting on a green leaf, cut out of a single piece of jade.

"Yes," I agreed, looking down at the cicada. "But this isn't T'ang," I added. "In my opinion, early Ming—say, around 1400."

Brandon nodded eagerly. "Good," he said. One of those undeniable human rapports had sprung up between us, but he still tried me again.

"How would you date this?" he asked, passing me a flat, pierced disc of jade, ornamented with rounded grains on one

surface, and dark green in colour. I examined it closely. It was a tricky question.

"I wouldn't," I said. "Not accurately. But one thing I know as a shop-keeper. I could sell it to a first-class American museum or collector as Chou—B.C. in any case—and be confident of not having a lawsuit on my hands. It's very fine, and very early."

Brandon put his head on one side and tried to shake me. "I wouldn't put it earlier than Han," he said quietly.

"Just as I might be right in calling it Chou," I said.

The old man stood up. "A true Callard," he said. "I respect your judgment."

He walked round the table and shook me by the hand.

That was how I began to buy, bit by bit, year by year, as he offered it to us, the Brandon Collection. To say that it raised my reputation with my head buyer is an understatement. He began to get inquiries from the United States and South America as soon as the quality of the new pieces was noticed. He himself visited Mr. Brandon at Heckmanswyke, to try to make larger purchases, but was rebuffed. I was the only person the old man would sell to, and the only pieces he would sell were pieces selected for disposal by himself. He never allowed me to see the whole, or even the bulk, of his collection.

One day, after I had been up there perhaps half a dozen times, he said to me: "Your buyer thinks a lot of you, Jim. So do I. Not only because you love jade. He has told me what you do for your mother and brothers."

I blushed. It had always seemed normal, since my father died when I was sixteen, to be the breadwinner for the family. It sounded heroic to others, I suppose. Anyway, when I left with my purchases that afternoon, he came to the front door with me, and there was an extra package on the hall table. He picked it up and handed it to me.

"Sell that one on your own account," he said, "and send your mother away for a holiday. Go yourself if you can, too. It ought to fetch two hundred." He paused for a second, then added: "And by the way, don't keep it, Jim! I say this because I know you might be tempted. I've phoned Spandrell of Bond Street that you are offering the piece on my behalf—tomorrow."

I stammered my thanks.

"It's about time I did some good with my jade—before I die," he said bitterly, as he showed me to the car.

I did not see him again for over six months. My holiday abroad with my mother—in Italy—was long since over. A call came one evening from Brandon, asking me to come to Heckmanswyke

immediately. His voice sounded hoarse and as though he were out of breath. He begged me to come next day if possible, or at any rate before the end of the week. It was easy for me to get permission to go: we had a big buyer from Pittsburg on the way over, and wanted something new and splendid to show him.

At the Old Hall, Marsh, the butler, received me with a long, serious face.

"I'm afraid you'll find Mr. Brandon greatly changed, Mr. Callard," he said gravely. "I thought I would warn you. He has given instructions that you dine in his bedroom. He will take nothing himself. He can hardly swallow any more, you see . . ."

I found the old man propped up in bed, holding a letter in his hand. He could speak only in a whisper. I took his hand and told him about Florence and Rome, desperately, to hide my sorrow over the straits in which I found him. For a moment he smiled, then held up his hand to stop me from talking.

"Good, Jim," he said. "But let me talk, please, while I can."

Very slowly and painfully, he spoke for half an hour—and gave me one of the biggest surprises of my life. His first words were: "Jim, I've left you the whole of my collection of jade—what's left of it—in my will. I can't last long—a week at the most, I'm told. Let me explain why I am doing this. I have no near relatives. My wife died when we were young. We had no children. You are, I think, the only person I ever knew who loves jades as I do. Whether you enjoy them more than I have depends entirely on you."

He paused, and I listened, moved, but predominantly excited over my tremendous luck.

"The collection's yours. That's the first thing. But there's something else I've got to tell you—so unpleasant that I thought at first of not doing it. I've never in my life had the character to do right, to take unpleasant decisions. It has been a horrible weakness. I intended to tell you about it as you had your dinner by my bedside. I even gave orders to Marsh to serve you here, for that reason. But I know that I can't do it. As in life, so in death. I can't tell the truth, face to face."

He turned away from me on the pillow and stared at the wall. He was weeping.

"You have been a friend," I said softly, "a true friend. I've learned much from you and loved you like a father for teaching me."

"Don't!" he exclaimed. "Even if it's true!"

"Let me thank you, at least," I said.

He sighed deeply.

"Take this letter," he said. "I have just written it. Put it

in the top drawer of my desk—the one near the window. In the same drawer you will find my will, and my jade catalogues . . . Thanks! . . . I want you now to go away and dine, then come back to me. While you are away I shall fight my last battle against my conscience. I would rather be able to tell you what I have to say by word of mouth, but if, after tonight, I am still a coward, read the letter after my death. It tells you everything."

The man was in a pitiful state of distress, and I took his hand. He rested for a few minutes, then continued.

"Why did I choose jade?" he whispered. "The symbol of charity, rectitude, wisdom, courage, equity? When you have read the letter, you will despise me, and justly. Read it before the will and catalogue are opened, and try to act in your own best interests. What these are I must leave to you to decide. I know what you should do. When you have dined I may even pluck up my courage and tell you . . ."

I left him wandering a little in his mind, I thought. He never spoke to me again. When I returned to his room after dinner, he was lying very still and upright on his pillow, dead . . .

The letter was in his desk where I had placed it only an hour before, and I read it at once, standing by his bedside:

Dear Jim,

My collection of jades is worth, I estimate, £30,000. It is left to you in my will, absolutely.

What I have failed miserably to tell you is that not a piece of it is really mine. To leave it to you is nothing more than an act of vanity. I was born to some money. I raised myself to luxury by organized theft. My chief prey was what I loved best—jade. I became not only the greatest connoisseur of jade in the country but also the greatest expert on who owned it. Eventually, I milked almost every collection and private owner I visited—I won't describe to you by what artifices.

My catalogue of jades is divided into sections, each one with a date written after it in red and a number. Attached to this letter is a key to these numbers. They show the collections from which the various pieces came, and my note on the countries in which it will be safest to sell them. I never sell anything until ten years after I have "acquired" it. That is the meaning of the dates in red: add ten years, and you get the selling dates. Consult the key for the safe countries—and the fortune is yours. You will find jade highly negotiable.

Destroy this letter. It is the only evidence. Good-bye.

R.S.B.

That letter brought me nearer than I like to think to losing my own soul. It took me three weeks to decide to take it to the police. I did it in the end because I suddenly felt I knew the decision Roger Brandon wanted me to take—the decision which would enable me to continue to love jade in pure simplicity, for the five virtues which it symbolizes.

One generous owner to whom my action restored his property called on me six months later and gave me a piece of what would have been my inheritance, as a thank-offering. It was a milk-white Kuan-Yin, the Goddess of Mercy.

Every year, on the day that Roger Brandon died, I burn a little incense before her, and remember mercifully the lost soul of a man who tempted me deeply when I was three and twenty —and poor.

* * *

ANSWERS to PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST on page 22

1. *Louis Dubedat, the consumptive artist who borrowed money from the physicians, in George Bernard Shaw's play, "The Doctor's Dilemma."*
2. *Andrea del Sarto, the "Faultless Painter," in the poem of that title by Robert Browning.*
3. *Gulley Jimson, who painted a vast mural on the wall of a derelict chapel, in the novel, "The Horse's Mouth," by Joyce Cary.*
4. *Basil Hallward, who was murdered by the vicious Dorian, in "The Picture of Dorian Gray," by Oscar Wilde.*
5. *Pygmalion, the sculptor whose statue came to life and whose story is told by Ovid in the "Metamorphoses."*
6. *William Bagot, known as "Little Billee," who fell in love with his model, Trilby, in the novel of that title by George du Maurier.*
7. *Marcel the artist, who loved Musetta in "La Bohème," the opera by Puccini, based on Murger's story, "La Vie de Bohème."*
8. *Mr. Fortune, A.R.A., who had twenty sons and failed to "get a likeness once," in the verse entitled "A Portrait Painter," by G. Rostrevor Hamilton.*
9. *Mademoiselle Noémie Nioche, the adventuress in "The American," by Henry James.*

Povenaaa's Daughter

by JAMES A. MICHENER

NORTH of Tahiti the *Hiro* began to roll, and before long all the passengers were seasick. That is, they were all sick except a remarkable Polynesian woman of fifty who sat on one of the forward hatches munching something she had pulled from a paper bag.

She was ridiculously fat. Her jowls seemed to run down onto her shoulders, and her body, from neck to knee, was one unbroken ball of suet, covered by a blue-and-red Mother Hubbard which swayed solemnly about her ankles with each motion of the wallowing ship.

The bag from which she selected her dainties was quite greasy, and two men, long hovering at the vomit point, were thrust over when they saw what this large woman was eating. For Maggi—that was her only name—was eating fish-heads. She would lift one from the bag, inspect it, then crack it with her teeth. There would follow a sucking sound, a smacking of lips and then more cracking, as if a dog were worrying a marrowbone.

When she had quite drawn out all the goodness from the fish-head she would toss the skeleton in an arc over the rail and into the sea. Then she would loudly suck each of her eight fingers before probing once more among her inexhaustible supply of delicacies.

At the ship's rail hung a limp Chinaman, so sick he thought he must die. Four times, just as he hoped he was becoming accustomed to the wicked roll of the *Hiro*, a fish-head would go whirling past his face and he would collapse with retching. As the fifth head passed an inch from his nose he stormed in outraged protest, " For the love of God, fat woman ! Stop eating those fish-heads ! "

The woman in the Mother Hubbard put down her paper bag, wiped the grease off her huge cheeks, and looked at the miserable Chinaman. Placing her hands at spots where her hips had once been, she taunted. " You've thrown over more than half of yourself. Jump

★ A Magnificent Story by the author of "South Pacific"

"My island!" he cried in passionate recognition. The beautiful native girl pressed close beside him and, like enchanted voyagers, the lovers gazed spellbound, as the first dagger of light cut across their small, pitching ship

after it!" Then, with ponderous grace, she rose and lurched over to the rail, where she swatted the sick man on the back.

"Throw it up, Kim Sing!" she cried. She drew a greasy fish-head from her sack and rubbed it under the Chinaman's nose, holding him by the waist as he heaved in agony. "That wasn't so bad, was it?" she asked like a mother.

Affectionately she dragged the near-dead Oriental to her hatch. After consuming two more heads she tossed the bag into the ocean and wiped her hands on the ample hem of her dress. Then, belching twice, she adjusted her huge bulk to the ridges on which she sat and asked, "Did you accomplish anything in Papeete?"

For a moment the sick man was unable to reply, but somehow the vast amplitude of the woman encouraged him and he said, "I made a contract for all my vanilla."

"Good!" she said with a crisp finality that meant she was saying nothing about her own mission to the capital.

But towards morning the Chinaman saw her smiling to herself in considerable satisfaction and he asked, "What did you find in Papeete that makes you smile, Maggi?"

She was not to be tricked. She laughed to herself for a moment, then rose and hurried to the rail. She peered into the stormy night and caught, along the horizon to the east, the first faint glow of dawn. It was a mere thread of pale light, yet as it played upon the tempestuous waters she could see, past the prow of the ship, waves breaking upon a reef. She studied the scene for some moments until she was satisfied that it was indeed her reef. Then she returned to the hatch and cried in a loud voice, "We'll soon be there!"

This caused a great commotion among the restless steerage passengers and they crowded the rail to catch the first sight of Raiatea, the ancient island from which all of Polynesia had been settled in the old days. In the dark mistiness of dawn they saw the island mysteriously appear out of the ocean, the spray high upon the reefs, the rain clouds low upon the historic hills.

Then suddenly, like the shifting mood of a wind that scurries across the surface of the sea, the passengers stopped mumbling to themselves, and Maggi, forgetting the Chinaman, elbowed her way forward to the prow of the ship, where she stood in the morning rain.

She stood with her head cocked as if she were listening for a sound. But she was not, for on one of the off-shore breezes came that most puissant of all island smells : the sweet, rich, perfumed, heavy, unforgettable odour of vanilla, ripening after harvest. The alluring sweetness filled the ocean. It was like the fragrance of many flowers, the richness of fine food, the sweetness of tropic sunshine. It was the smell of dawn. It rolled in blankets from the shores of Raiatea, the symbol of wealth, the reward of labour. Fat Maggi breathed heavily and thought, " I would give everything I smelled in Papeete for this. They speak of Paris ! Pouf ! "

As the *Hiro* curved its way to the creaking wharf, Maggi waited impatiently at the gangplank and even before it was secured started to let herself down on to the dock.

A group of cheering young men helped her, yanking her red-and-blue dress awry, but as soon as she felt the earth under her feet, she shook herself loose and plopped onto her head a pandanus hat, which she secured with one hand while running as fast as her bulk would permit through the copra sheds and down the main street of Raiatea.

As she hurried along many villagers called to her, seeking news of Tahiti. But on this day Maggi had no gossip to spare. She hurried on and at last half-galloped through the open doors of the island's only hotel.

" Povenaaa ! she bellowed. " Oh, Povenaaa ! "

The hotel into which she had thus burst—Le Croix de Sud—was such a place as would have captured the imagination of Joseph Conrad had he voyaged to Raiatea. It was a two-storey affair with an interior balcony off which opened several dismal rooms. The ground level was crammed with small, square tables, each attended by four chairs. An open kitchen, with many battered pots and pans, led to the rear and a dirty bar edged one side. A Japanese octagonal clock had run down some years before and now showed three-twenty, while a fly-specked portrait of Clémenceau surveyed the bar. And in one corner, barefooted and with a torn shirt, huddled a thin unshaven Polynesian man, sleeping off his drink. This was her neighbour, Povenaaa.

Maggi's cries having had no effect upon the sleeper, she let fly with a solid kick and shouted, " Povenaaa ! What a morning to sleep ! "

The drowsy man twisted on his numbed hip, punched two dirty fists into his eyes and looked up protestingly. When he recognized Maggi he scrambled to his feet, using her solid body as a post by which to haul himself to attention.

" Maggi ! " he cried, embracing her. " I didn't expect you ! "

" Oh, Povenaaa ! What news ? "

He became all attention. He took off her hat and placed it carefully on a hook. He held a chair for her and banged furiously on the table for service. " Hey, there ! Two breakfasts ! "

A misanthropic servant produced coffee cups which weighed a pound each, great brutal things, cold brioches and rancid Australian butter, served in a tin with a jagged edge. As Maggi sipped the

chicory-laden brew, Povenaaa twisted his toes around the rung of the chair and asked impatiently, " What's the news, Maggi ? Money ? " The big woman tried to play coy and savoured her coffee down to the sticky sugar. Then she straightened her Mother Hubbard and said with tremendous import, " What we've waited for, Povenaaa. The Americans are back ! "

The effect of this news on Povenaaa was electric. He rubbed his unwashed face, pressed down the front of his dirty shirt and cried ecstatically, " Ah ! Les Américains ! "

" Yes. The yachts have begun to arrive."

" Lots of men ? " Povenaaa drooled. " Lots of money ? "

" Like the old days," Maggi replied, and the two neighbours sighed nostalgically. Then abruptly, as if a deal had been concluded, Maggi slapped the table and cried, " Well ! Why do we wait ? Get Teuru ! "

Povenaaa rose creakingly, shook the hangover out of his joints and went uncertainly to the door, bellowing, " Teuru ! Teuru ! "

From a clapboard house down the road a young girl appeared. She had been interrupted at her toilet, for she carried a brush with which she tugged at her long black hair which fell to her waist. She was barefooted and wore a cotton skirt with a skimpy bandanna halter. She was not a girl of extraordinary beauty, but she was handsomely proportioned and majestically straight in the Polynesian fashion. But her most memorable gift was a gamin smile and flashing black eyes that brimmed with an inner merriment.

She stood in the dust of the road, looking for her father, and when she saw him stumbling out from Le Croix du Sud she laughed affectionately and said, " Father ! Stop that noise ! You're drunk again."

" No, Teuru ! Such news ! "

With much nervous excitement, Povenaaa led his daughter into the hotel and arranged a seat beside Maggi, who pinched her on the chin and cried, " I'm so happy for you ! "

Before Teuru could ask why, some tourists from the *Hiro* entered the hotel and the men could not keep their eyes off the young girl, for it was deliciously apparent that she wore nothing beneath her cotton skirt, since Povenaaa had forced his daughter into her chair in such a way as to expose a splendid leg.

The men's eyes popping at the bar gave Maggi intense pleasure but after the peep show had continued for some minutes, unknown to Teuru, the fat woman leaned over and with ostentatious prudery pulled down the offending dress. " Never show that much," she whispered, " except on purpose."

Povenaaa clasped his hands and giggled, " Teuru ! You're going to Tahiti ! "

" But I've never been to Tahiti," Teuru protested.

Maggi pulled her chair away from the bar and whispered, " You'll go, Teuru, and on the first day you'll meet a rich American on his yacht. All across the Pacific he'll have been dreaming of you."

" But I've never seen an American," Teuru pointed out.

Maggi ignored the interruption and said, " He'll let you live in his

cabin. You'll eat your meals at the Yacht Club. Chinese girls will sew your dresses."

"You'll wear shoes, of course," Povenaaa interrupted. "White men like their girls to wear shoes."

"And if you find a handsome young lover," Maggi continued, "you'll have enough American money to pay his rent at the Hotel Montparnasse, where you can meet him at night."

"When the rich American is asleep," Povenaaa explained.

"And when the yacht sails there'll be another one coming in," Maggi said, recalling her boisterous youth in Papeete. "And who knows? Maybe later you will even get married."

Teuru listened to this recital with close attention. Povenaaa had always told her that some day the rich Americans would be coming back and it would be heaven for pretty girls. "And you'll be pretty!" he had assured her.

"But I wouldn't know what to do," she blushed.

"Do!" Maggi roared. "You don't do anything!" Then she dropped her voice and said, "With American men it's very simple. Look at that fellow at the bar. He's French, but all men are more or less the same. Povenaaa and I will leave. I'll manage to pull your dress up the way it was before. Watch what happens!"

As the big woman led Povenaaa from the hotel she hitched up Teuru's dress accidentally, and all the men at the bar snapped to attention. A wife complained, "You haven't stared at me like that for ten years, Henri." To which he replied, "Ah, yes! But you haven't looked like that for fifteen."

Then one of them reacted as Maggi had prophesied. In three minutes he was trying to buy Teuru a drink.

When the tourist had been eased away, Maggi said, "See! It's simple! And with an American—much easier." Dramatically she fumbled in her bag and produced a slip of paper. "Voilà! M'mzelle Teuru! Her ticket to Tahiti!"

The excitement of an actual ticket on the *Hiro* and the lure of Papeete were powerful, and Teuru's dark eyes bubbled with merry anticipation, but suddenly they sobered and she said, "I can't go."

"Why not?" Maggi snorted.

"I promised . . . Kim Sing . . . to work his vanilla vines again."

Povenaaa exploded. "The Chinaman's vanilla! You compare that to a rich American!"

Maggi explained, "There's no reason to be afraid of Americans. I remember when they had a certain major who was what the men called an old bitch. Nobody could do anything with him. So I sent Hedy over and half an hour later she had his pants off."

Inspired, Povenaaa went to the door and roared, "Hedy! Come here!"

In a moment the heads at the bar almost snapped off, for into the doorway came a slim Polynesian girl of twenty-four. She held a very blonde child by the hand, and these two created an impression of perfect beauty. Hedy—she had been so designated by the Americans—had a delicate beauty. Her loveliness was enhanced by the frangi-

pani flowers which she had chosen to adorn her hair.

When she spoke her voice was childish and musical. She did not want her daughter to enter the bar, so she said, " Major, you go back home." Then she saw Maggi and cried in her tinkling voice, " Good return, Maggi ! "

" For you it's good," Maggi chuckled.

" You bring a message ? " Hedy asked, keeping her eyes shyly upon the floor so that she would not have to look at the strange men along the bar.

" Such a message ! " Povenaaa beamed.

" The Americans ! " Maggi whispered. " They're back."

Unlike Teuru, Hedy knew how to appreciate this luxurious news. She smiled with delicate satisfaction, moved a little nearer Maggi, and sighed, " During the war they used to say, ' Come peace, Baby, you'll see me back here with a fist full of dough.' "

" She talks just like an American," Povenaaa said proudly.

Hedy sighed again and sort of hugged herself. " I should like to be in Papeete now ! "

" And here's your ticket ! " Maggi cried, producing another strip of paper.

" Oh, Maggi ! " Hedy cried, embracing the fat woman. Then she pouted, " But what about Major ? "

" I was thinking about Major," Maggi said softly.

There was a long moment while Hedy and Maggi stared at each other. Then, impulsively, the younger woman kissed the older and laughed, " You've always wanted Major, haven't you ? Well, she's yours."

Then Povenaaa spoke, officially. " You girls will love Papeete. I want you to behave yourselves." Then he stopped. He saw tears in his daughter's eyes. " What's the matter, Teuru ? " he snapped.

" I want to see Papeete," she said haltingly. " I think I would like Americans but . . ."

" Poor little Teuru ! " Povenaaa whispered. But her indecision frightened him and he realized he must tell the whole truth. " You must go," he pleaded. " For my sake if for nothing else. For if you could save only three hundred American dollars . . . well, I could buy that surplus jeep on Bora Bora." He looked at Teuru in triumph, as if the coveted vehicle were already his. " And with a jeep ! Why, I could be a very important man in Raiatea. With a jeep, that is."

The *Hiro* blew its whistle once. " I must pack ! " Hedy cried. " Maggi ! You must help me."

The *Hiro* blew its whistle twice, and then followed an amazing pageant of Polynesian life. Everybody on the dock began to weep. Maggi lowed and whimpered like a grief-stricken heifer. Povenaaa blubbered helplessly, repeating over and over again, " My daughter ! My daughter ! "

Stragglers who had drifted down merely to watch the *Hiro* were caught in the lamenting and they too wept in an abandonment of sorrow. Tahiti lay less than a hundred miles away, and the ship

sailed each week, but the sorrow in Raiatea could have been no greater had the passengers this day been destined for the Arctic wastes.

In a final debauchery of despair Maggi shrieked, "Hedy, look after Teuru!"

Hedy burst into passionate tears and screamed, "Povenaaa, I'll show Teuru what to do."

The *Hiro* blew its whistle the last time and stood out into the channel, and as it did so a transformation came over Hedy. She stopped weeping instantly, lifted her lovely head into the breeze and looked southward. "Oh, Teuru," she whispered happily. "Tomorrow night we shall sleep in Papeete!" Then a frown puckered her forehead and she added, "But I wonder with whom?"

Teuru blushed. A delicate colour came to her cheeks, shining for a moment under the soft brown skin. "It's all very well to joke about such things, but . . ."

"Sssh!" Hedy warned. "Those gentlemen are looking at us. I'll bet they want to buy us some beer." But when she turned she saw that Teuru was weeping. "Why are you crying now?" she asked sharply. "The boat's sailed."

And Teuru sniffled, "You've been away from home before. I haven't."

But by the following evening, when the *Hiro* like an exhausted porpoise rolled on towards Tahiti, Teuru's bubbling good humour returned and she shared in the general excitement as the glorious climax of their journey unfolded. To the west sprang the peaks of Moorea, crimson in sunlight. Ahead loomed the stumpy, cloud-wreathed hills of Tahiti. Seagulls dipped majestically about the ship, welcoming it as if it were a rich caravel, and even the seasick cattle revived as they caught the scent of land.

"Hedy!" Teuru cried, "look at those beautiful ships!"

"They must be the yachts," Hedy said, straightening her dress.

To starboard, tied up to the quay that ran along the waterfront, stood a huge ship painted white. Along its deck moved sailors, also in white, each with a red pompom on his hat.

"It's a French ship," Hedy sniffed scornfully. "You stay away from the French."

"It's lovely," Teuru said happily. "Even if it is French." Like most residents of the northern islands, she had inherited a revolutionary hatred of the French who had subdued her islands last and with force.

"Ah!" Hedy cried. "Those yachts are American!"

But Teuru was fascinated by the warship, and as the tired old *Hiro* limped into port she stood at the railing and stared at the cruiser *Jean Delacroix* as long as it remained visible. Then, perforce, she had to look elsewhere, and for the first time she saw the rich panorama of Papeete.

Along the quay important Frenchmen bustled in coats that seemed too tight. Chinamen rode bicycles that teetered perilously, while handsome native men from the fishing boats hauled bonito onto the cobbled stones. Girls in Paris frocks walked slowly back and forth

in twos and threes as officials in uniform bustled about giving orders and a nest of tourists lolled in a hired sports car blowing their horn at everyone. Three nuns waited on the dock for a sister reporting in from an outstation, and innumerable black and white and yellow boys ran screaming into alleys.

There was a colour about Papeete that night that Teuru never would forget. The white clouds turning to purple. The silvery flash of bonito as they scintillated in the sun. The golden yellow towers of the Douane. The majestic motion of many people as their various colours blended, and everywhere the glorious flowers of Tahiti.

That was how Povenaaa's daughter arrived in Papeete. She stepped upon the dock barefooted, in a close-fitting green-and-white pareu, her long black hair reaching her waist, a frangipani behind her left ear, a little wicker suitcase in her hand, and on the back of her head, a straw hat. She took a deep breath of the new air and whispered, " We're here, Hedy."

The older girl presented a much different appearance. She wore shoes, very high in the heel, and a dress drawn tightly about her small waist. Her hair was done in plaited strands wound into a crown. For lips she had two scarlet dabs, but against the white flowers in her hair they seemed appropriate. She handed Teuru her suitcase, explaining, " American men don't like to see pretty girls lugging things."

As if she had lived in Papeete all her life, she led Teuru off the dock and westward to where the yachts were anchored. She knew she had little time, for the sun already had the peaks of Moorea aflame. Then abruptly she stopped.

Suddenly she was no longer in a hurry.

Motioning Teuru to stay behind, she sidled along the waterfront to where a yacht was tied stern to. A man of fifty was leaning over a board, cleaning fish. Hedy laughed musically and the yachtsman looked up.

" Watcha laughin' at ? " he demanded.

" That's no way to clean a fish ! " Hedy taunted.

" Whatsa matter with my way ? "

" You'll cut yourself."

She leaned slightly on the ropes, swaying with the motion of the ship. Then she laughed again.

" You think you could do it any better ? " the yachtsman asked.

" Sure ! " Hedy cried, using a French accent she had found irresistible during the war.

" If you're so smart, let's see." The man reached aft with a boat hook and steadied Hedy as she swung herself aboard. " What's your name ? " he asked.

" Fish-cleaner," she teased.

" No. Your real name."

" Hedy," she replied.

The slender girl leaned over to survey the mutilated fish, but she was careful to keep her lovely profile steady for several seconds.

The yachtsman moved towards her, attracted by her extravagant charm, but as he did so she lifted the fish and laughed at him with tinkling music.

"You've ruined the fish," she said.

"Where'd'joo learn to speak English so good?"

"Oh!" she cried. "My bag!" She ran to the stern and started to shin down the ropes.

"Don't go!" the American cried.

"I'll be back," she reassured him.

"What are you going to do?" Teuru whispered.

"Stop here for a while," Hedy said.

"What am I to do?" Teuru pleaded.

"Well," said the self-assured little beauty with a flip of her head, "there's a lot more yachts."

"I couldn't do that."

Suddenly Hedy was all tender affection. "You're right! You've got to take these things very slowly. I remember when Maggi smuggled me ashore at Bora Bora. I was scared to death. I knew I'd never be able to talk with a major. An American, too."

"Were you?"

"Oh, yes," Hedy replied. She kissed Teuru good-bye and the girls began to cry.

The sobbing, rose to a wail of remorse and lonely anguish. The American was totally bewildered as he watched his girl open her purse and hand the barefooted stranger a fistful of francs. He was even more surprised when Hedy wiped her eyes, flashed him a wonderful smile, pitched her bag aboard and shinned up the ropes with the friendly cry, "All right! Where's that fish?"

Teuru was now alone in Papeete. Stuffing Hedy's benevolent francs into her suitcase, she pulled out a slim scrap of paper on which Maggi had scrawled two words: HOTEL MONTPARNASSE.

She was about to seek a policeman when she beheld a sight that would have made the heart of any young girl dance with pleasure. Down the quay came three French sailors in dazzling white uniforms and red pompoms. Their shorts stopped crisply at the knee and they wore hard-ribbed white socks and highly polished shoes. They were laughing. They were laughing and making a great fuss, so that Teuru had to laugh, too.

They saw her hesitating at the edge of the road and quickly surrounded her. In French the tallest cried, "Ah, the village maiden comes to the city!" Then they offered her a cigarette.

"Ah! Virtuous maiden! She doesn't smoke!"

"I'm looking for a hotel," Teuru explained.

"Voilà!" the sailors shouted.

"What happens here?" a policeman asked, patting himself on the belly.

"We're showing m'mzelle to her hotel!" the tall sailor announced, making a little rhyme which his friends mimicked in mincing style.

They grabbed her by the waist and swung her down the street,

so that she had to dance with them. Then they lifted her high into the air and planted her bare feet on the pavement.

"The hotel of m'mzelle!" they cried, and then the leader said very seriously, "Let it never be remarked that the men of *Jean Delacroix* were not gallant. Your official welcome to Papeete." And he kissed her firmly on the lips.

"So, too, the engine-room crew!" cried the next sailor, holding her face to attention and wiping off his lips with his shirt-sleeve.

But the third sailor stood back. He blushed considerably and indicated that he would not force his attentions on Teuru. His companions mocked him and the leader cried, "M'mzelle! Our good friend Victor, he does not like girls! Therefore, on behalf of Victor, I salute you again." He lifted her into his arms, but this time Teuru did not feel his lips, for over his shoulder she saw the confused, scarlet face of Victor.

When the sailors left, their six handsome white-ribbed legs making rare patterns in the dusk, Teuru watched them for a moment, then laughed and hoisted her suitcase, turned on her bare feet and marched into the Hotel Montparnasse.

This establishment, so inappropriately named, faced the peaks of Moorea, but otherwise its facilities were unspeakable. It had served wastrels and wanderers for almost a hundred years, and in that time Rupert Brooke, Stevenson and Gauguin had lounged upon its dirty verandah, staring at the pantomime of Papeete. Now it was run by a German woman who wore stiff black lace collars, as if to bring to the hotel a respectability it had never owned.

"What do you want?" Frau Henslick snapped.

Teuru thrust the piece of paper on to the counter and Frau Henslick shouted, "What am I supposed to do? This says nothing."

"Maggi sent me."

"You mean the fat woman?"

"Yes!" Teuru beamed. "She said you might need help."

"I do," Frau Henslick cried. "I always do." She came from behind the counter and examined Teuru as if she were a horse. "Got your teeth?" Teuru opened her mouth and the woman nodded approvingly. "Can you work?"

"Yes," Teuru said. "I'm a good worker."

Suddenly the German woman screamed, "When you work here I want you to sleep in your own bed."

"What do you mean?" Teuru asked.

The German woman screamed even more loudly, "You island girls!"

That ended the conversation. Frau Henslick led Teuru to a dingy room, kicked open the door and said, "You start work at six in the morning." Before the girl could reply, the angular woman had disappeared.

It was then seven, and Teuru was hungry, but before she could ask about food she heard the heavy shouting of a man: "Damn it! I want some hot water!"

There was some scuffling and Frau Henslick banged open Teuru's

door. "You!" she shouted. "Take this upstairs to Mr. Roe."

Teuru lugged the pitcher to the upper hall and then wondered where she should deliver it. Reasoning that if she waited the man would shout again, she heard an irritated bellow issue from Room Sixteen: "You old sow! Where's the water?"

Cautiously, she pushed open the door and faced a young man standing in his shorts. He was red-headed and had a week's growth of beard. "Thanks," he said, turning his back on her.

At the door she asked, "Are you an American?"

"Yes," he said, swabbing his face.

"I've never seen an American before."

"We're pretty sturdy stuff," he said, lathering his beard.

She started downstairs, but he came to the door and called, "You eaten yet? Good. I'm just getting over a four-day drunk. How about holding me up till I get to the restaurant?"

"I'll put my shoes on," she said.

"Don't bother. I never wear any."

He studied the mirror and shuddered: "Let's get out of here!"

He took her to the Yacht Club and insisted that she order the best of everything. He himself took poached eggs but couldn't manage them. Instead he sat back and admired the way she stuffed down the meat and vegetables. "I was hungry," she said.

"I feel nourished, just watching you," he laughed, but she made him eat some of her meat and he said it tasted pretty good.

From the street came the sound of music and he said, "Would you like to dance?"

"I have no shoes."

"You forget, neither have I."

He led her to Quinn's, a place Maggi had often mentioned, and there Teuru saw the gaiety of this island. As soon as Mr. Roe entered, everybody shouted to him and couples stopped by his table to ask what was new. He made no move to dance and she was not surprised when a very beautiful girl in shoes took him completely away. He did not return to Teuru at all but sat across the floor drinking gin and growing more glazed each hour.

In her embarrassment, Teuru was about to leave when there was a commotion at the door and the three French sailors roared in. The leader saw Teuru at once and swung her on to the floor. He was good at native dances and flourished his hips as well as an island man. Soon Teuru felt her hair swinging about her shoulders, and then, as earlier that night, she saw across the room the penetrating stare of thin-faced Victor.

When she joined the sailors at their table, the young man rose properly, bowed and said, "My name is Victor de la Foret," and in those brief words he opened for Teuru a completely new vision of life, because when she said that she was from Raiatea, he replied, "I was born there."

"You were?" she asked. "I never heard of you."

"In spirit," he explained. "I had an uncle who served in these islands, and from the time I was a boy . . ." Nervously at first and

then with a rush of golden words he told Teuru the history of her island: the hills that contained the sacred marae, the straits from which the canoes set out to populate the Pacific, the forgotten groves where the lewd ritual dances were held. He was only twenty-one and he had never seen Raiatea, but he knew the island better than Teuru, who had left it only yesterday.

When Quinn's closed the young couple walked along the quay until they found a bench, and then he told her of the map he had drawn of Raiatea, many years ago. "It was marked with a star," he said.

"What for?" she asked.

"Raiatea was the source. Women like you bore brave sons and they risked all the dangers of the sea."

For a moment these new ideas cast a spell over Teuru and she was back in the age when men of Raiatea ruled the oceans. Not until that night had she known that she carried such blood. Better than she could have liked any American, she liked this young sailor, and impulsively she reached out her brown hand and touched the red pompom. "It dances," she said, "on your white hat."

Victor drew back and even in the faltering light she could detect his blush. "You shouldn't have done that," he said nervously.

"Why not?" she asked perplexed.

"It's a rule," he said. "A silly rule."

"What is?"

"A girl . . . who touches a pompom . . . a sailor's red pompom, that is . . ."

"I'm very sorry," Teuru apologized..

"It's nothing," he assured her. "A stupid rule. But she must kiss him."

This was not play-kissing and Teuru rose in embarrassment and started to leave, but Victor caught her by the hand and said quietly, "Tonight . . . when the others were kissing you . . . I was afraid."

In stately grace the barefooted girl bent down and placed her lips on his. Her long hair fell about his shoulders and across his eyes. At first he did not move. Then, in an excess of joy, he flung his arms about her and pulled her down upon his knees. "You are like the queen of my island," he whispered.

These words were very sweet to Teuru, but she was somewhat perplexed—recalling all that Maggi had told her about how men behave—when Victor made no move to kiss her again but spent the night asking her detailed questions about Raiatea. Towards morning, when pale light was quivering upon the tips of Moorea, a bugle sounded on the *Jean Delacroix* and Victor said he must leave.

"I must see you each day," he whispered. Then, staring at his shoes, he confided his secret. "I joined the *Jean Delacroix* to see these islands. Because, you understand, I am going to write a great poem about Raiatea. In the ancient days, of course."

A policeman stopped by the bench and said, "You'd better get back to your ship, vice-admiral."

" Will you talk with me again tonight ? " Victor begged, and Teuru said that she would.

She reached the Montparnasse at five minutes to six and Frau Henslick screamed, " Come in, you baggage. Are you sober enough to work ? "

" I'm all right," Teuru replied. Indeed, she thought the words had never really applied to her before that moment. She felt all right.

Teuru was not bothered by the Montparnasse because she herself lived in a kind of dream world. During almost every free moment she was with Victor de la Foret. On hired bicycles they rode and then clambered up to the pool of Pierre Loti where, generations before, the romantic novelist had wooed his island girl.

They danced, went to boxing shows and sat in the movies. But most of all they talked. Teuru, who had been a quiet girl—Povenaaa's chin was always bobbing—now found herself able to speak for minutes at a time, relating her memories of Raiatea. True, she sometimes wondered when they were going to get around to those things that Maggi had said " were all that men wanted, anyway ! "

When Victor finally did, Teuru was completely shocked. It happened one night while they were sitting on the bench. The young sailor caught Teuru by the waist and cried, " We are going to get married ! "

" Married ! " Teuru repeated. She was astounded at the idea. After all, she was only seventeen, not nearly of an age to marry. She had not yet lived with a man, she had borne no children, knew nothing of life. She suspected that it was both unfair and ungallant of Victor to propose such a thing and in extreme perplexity she told him he had better go back to his ship.

" But will you marry me ? " he begged.

" Not right away," she parried, and as soon as he had left she scurried across the quay to Hedy's yacht and scrambled aboard.

They sat on the deck and Hedy listened carefully while Teuru explained about the wedding proposal. " I warned you ! " Hedy cried indignantly. " I told you Frenchmen were no good. To expect you to marry him. So young ! And no money ! "

" What shall I do ? " Teuru begged.

" You go back to Raiatea. Maggi and Povenaaa will tell you I'm right."

" Will you ever get married, Hedy ? "

" Of course. In two or three years."

" Then why can't I ? "

" At your age ! You haven't even had a baby yet. You go home."

So next morning Teuru informed Frau Henslick that she'd be sailing on the Tuesday *Hiro*.

She was wandering idly along the quay when a young man in civilian clothes . . .

" Victor ! " she cried. " I hardly knew you ! "

" I was keeping it as a surprise. My enlistment's up and I cabled

Paris for special permission to stay out here." He dropped his voice and added, "So that we could get married."

"But we can't!" Teuru objected. "I'm going home on the next *Hiro*."

"That's what I planned, too," he said eagerly.

"What did you plan?" Teuru asked, half in tears.

"To go with you . . . to Raiatea. Our first home! We'll get married on Monday."

"But Povenaaa would never let us!" Teuru protested.

"We'll talk with M'sieur Povenaaa," Victor insisted, and on Tuesday they were aboard the *Hiro*.

All around was the music of a small ship ploughing through starry night: the lowing of cattle, the whispers of women talking, the patient throb of the reluctant engines, the cry of a night bird, the echo of waves against wood.

Teuru sat close to Victor and in spite of Hedy's warnings, in spite of what she knew Povenaaa and Maggi would say, she wanted to marry this Frenchman. She was about to tell him so when a mysterious sound came from the port quarter and Victor rose. He peered into the darkness and asked, "What is that noise?"

Teuru stood beside him, her face pressed into the wind, and before she could speak the first probing dagger of light cut across the waves and poised above the hills of Raiatea.

"My island!" de la Foret cried, and there was something in his passionate recognition of a land he had never seen that bewildered Teuru, yet at the same time she felt that she had found the one man with whom she could live for ever happily.

They stood like enchanted voyagers from another age as the pitching *Hiro* approached the island. These were the hills that had bred the bravest navigators the world has ever known. These were the valleys of the most lewd pagan rites, the sacred altars where human sacrifices had been dragged by the hair, the living monuments of a towering civilization—lost.

But their reverie was broken by shouts coming from the wharf. Some children had caught sight of the lovers and were screaming, "Povenaaa! Teuru has her American!"

The happy message sped through the crowd, for all the island knew of Teuru's mission, and all the villagers beamed approval of the handsome young American. Then, as the *Hiro* docked, there came a fresh commotion and the crowd fell back to make a pathway for Maggi, puffing and on fire. She took one look at the young people and shouted, "By God, girl! You've done it?" Then she turned and shouted, "Get Povenaaa!"

The gangway was lowered and Povenaaa received his first shock of the day, for when Teuru led Victor ashore, the first thing the young poet did was to stoop down and kiss the earth of Raiatea. "My God!" Povenaaa cried. "Is he sick?"

Maggi shook her fist at the *Hiro* and swore, "You'd give Jonah the seasickness."

Povenaaa led the procession to Le Croix du Sud and when the rancid butter appeared with the sour brioches he asked expansively, "And what part of America do you come from?"

Victor smiled and said, "I am a Frenchman."

There was a horrible silence while Maggi stared dumbly at Povenaaa's gaping jaw. Teuru tried to help things out by saying that Victor was really a French sailor, but that he'd been discharged on Saturday.

"Oh, my God!" Maggi groaned.

Now Victor tried to soothe things. "I've come here to marry your daughter."

"No!" Povenaaa exploded. "No French pig shall . . ."

"Father," Teuru pleaded. "Let's go home."

"I think we'd better," Maggi said limply.

"I want to marry your daughter," de la Foret said forcefully.

"No! She's too young!"

"And besides," Maggi added, "Frenchmen are not welcome here."

"She's right!" Povenaaa stormed. "No Frenchman will marry my daughter."

Now Teuru spoke. "But I love him. He's very gentle. He's a poet."

This caught Povenaaa off his guard. He stopped blustering and leaned forward. "Poets are very famous. Do they make a lot of money?"

"No," Teuru interrupted. "Not yet. But some day he will. He's writing a long poem. About Raiatea."

Povenaaa rose to his full height and announced dramatically, "There will be no marriage! Not between a poet and a girl only seventeen."

"What shall I do?" de la Foret cried, anguished that he must lose Teuru.

"You stay here, of course," Teuru replied.

"Here?" he repeated.

She lifted his bag and carried it into her small room. Next she fetched hers and placed it beside his. Then she stood in the doorway and motioned to him.

"You mean . . . I'm to stop here? With you?"

"But there's to be no marriage!" Povenaaa warned, defending his daughter from the unwelcome intruder. When de la Foret remained rooted in bewilderment, Povenaaa reached out and pushed him into Teuru's room. "You can stay here for the time being," he said grudgingly. "But no marriage!"

The disillusionment of young Victor de la Foret was catastrophic. It was not the disillusionment of love, for never had he been so happy. In the morning Teuru rose from their bed and polished the thin bamboo wafer she used on the vanilla flowers. Then she threw around herself a blue-and-white pareu and combed her radiant hair. Sometimes she would bring in a pawpaw, some limes, a mango or a pot of black coffee. They would eat together while the morning

birds made a symphony among the trees. Then she would kiss him good-bye and walk like some ancient goddess towards the vanilla plantations.

Nor was it the disillusionment of life with Povenaaa, who worked each night to bring America into the conversation. The disappointed father made it emphatic that a Frenchman was a pretty poor substitute for a Yank. He also delighted in dandling Major on his knee, adding that he guessed no babies in the world were as pretty as American babies. He said—staring boldly at Teuru—that he guessed any girl in the world would be mighty happy to have a child as intelligent as Major.

He taught the child to sing an amazing version of "Yankee Doodle." Worst of all, in an old copy of *Life* he found a full-page colour shot of a jeep. This he posted right where Victor and Teuru had to face it as they ate. But for the most part Povenaaa proved a decent sort, even though he used to ask Maggi almost every night, in a voice so loud that Victor had to hear, "I wonder when he's leaving."

No, the tragic disillusionment that overtook Victor de la Foret was that of Raiatea itself. Where had the once great civilization fled? How could the godlike subduers of the vast Pacific have degenerated into Povenaaa? Why, only last week sailors of Raiatea had fled back to port when a trivial storm overtook them at sea. He studied the relics of the island, hoping to find an answer, but in no stone could he detect a trace of the grandeur that had once inhabited this land.

Strangely, he found his only solace in Maggi, who often sat with Major on her lap, droning about the old days. She could recite the names of all the canoes that had penetrated the oceans even to Peru.

"But what happened, Maggi?"

"Now we stay home."

"But where did the grandeur vanish?"

"It's still here. You ever see Major's mother? There's grandeur. See Hedy!"

"I mean the spirit of life."

"It's here. Some time Teuru will take you to a real island dance."

Word arrived that there was to be one on nearby Bora Bora, and Victor arranged for a long boat to make the trip. He rode aft with Teuru and for a breathless moment he could believe that he was sailing with the immortal canoes.

Ahead rose the fantastic cliffs of Bora Bora, radiant in the sunlight. About him the birds wheeled as they had generations ago during the hegira. In counterpoint to the throbbing of the engine he could hear the men of Raiatea chanting songs whose very meaning had been lost in the dust of years. This was the historic grandeur of Polynesia: brown bodies thrusting forward into the unknown sea, frail boats riding to the sunrise. Ahead the sure knowledge that somewhere there must be an island. Behind the security of a beautiful homeland.

He had a further sensation of historic reality when he disembarked on the shore of Bora Bora where the cliffs dropped into the fairy-tale lagoon.

As dusk came on, lovers from all over the island gathered and a tomtom beat out traditional rhythms. Men leaped into the ring and began furious gyrations. Soon they were joined by handsome girls.

They danced, as if demented, a sexual ritual that probed far back into the past, until with furious cries the men caught the girls by the waist and threw them towards the jungle's edge.

There was a timeless moment when the men leaped beside the girls as lovers ages ago had done before dragging the women into the bush. But now came a nervous giggle and the girls rejoined their friends.

The spell broken, de la Foret had to recognize not some dim memory of the past but the harsher actualities of now. This once godlike people! Look at them! Their teeth falling out from the white man's food. Their health ruined with the white man's diseases. Even the flaming moon that had once risen above the volcano to shine down on rare, savage bodies now limped up from a dead volcano and shed a pallid light upon a doomed and dying race.

"Teuru," he whispered, "let's go back." She understood his disillusionment and tried to round up the Raiatea sailors, but they were afraid to set forth in the darkness.

That was the beginning of de la Foret's illness. He had no fever, no disease. He was sick of that almost incurable malady: today. When he watched Povenaaa trying to sell his daughter to some rich American, he was sick. When he dissected the trivial life of modern Raiatea, he was sick. There had once been a glory, but today it was vanished. Therefore he was ill with today's illness.

His poem never got beyond the first canto. True, that fragment was superb and was published with distinction. It dealt with Polynesia as a physical world: the sky, the stars, the lonely islands. It was when people were introduced that the poem turned to rot. Victor was aware of this and stopped writing. "I am sick," he repeated.

"You must come with me while I work the vines," Teuru laughed, and it was there that de la Foret rebuilt himself. Day after day he watched Teuru move among the vines, grasping in her firm left fingers the flowers that looked like orchids.

In her right hand she carried the bamboo wafer, which she deftly stroked along the stamen, collecting pollen. Then, with a twist of her left thumb, she snapped open the flap that protected the pistil and deposited upon it the pollen from her bamboo. Then she allowed the flap to snap back in place, whereupon she squeezed the pistil to be sure the pollen penetrated it.

"It's so tedious," Victor complained.

"Vanilla's too important to trust to luck," she explained. She said that every flower impregnated by her gentle method would produce a vanilla bean. Those she missed would die that night. "I do the work of bees and flies," she said.

Since the flowers opened at eight and closed at four, Teuru and Victor spent most of each day in the sunny fields, re-working the

same vines daily to pollinate each new flower. " Povenaaa must be a rich man with so much vanilla," de la Foret observed as he watched the long beans ripening in the sun.

" They're not Povenaaa's ! " Teuru laughed. " They belong to Kim Sing."

Then the sickness returned. The sunny islands of Polynesia were now owned by Chinese and Frenchmen and Germans. Everyone prospered. Only the Polynesians withered. " You spend so much care on a Chinaman's vines," Victor protested. " Who cares for you ? "

Teuru blushed. " Yes. Povenaaa was asking that last night."

" What do you mean ? "

She would not reply but that evening Povenaaa was most blunt. He had Major on his lap and asked, " When will you have a white baby, Teuru ? " His daughter blushed and made no reply. " Well ! " Povenaaa continued. " You have a man for eight months now. What's the matter ? "

Victor was outraged. " You shouldn't talk like that," he protested.

Maggi looked at him and sniffed. " Poets, hmmmm. I'll bet Hedy isn't fooling around with poets." She sucked at a bone and then called for Major. Swinging the child onto her lap she counselled, " Don't you ever bother with poets, Major."

Humiliated, young de la Foret left the table. Teuru found him along the shore. " What kind of father is Povenaaa ? " the poet cried.

" He knows I ought to have a baby pretty soon," Teuru replied.

" Stop it ! Are you trying to drive me mad ? " He pushed her away and stormed along the beach. When Teuru tried to keep up with him he shouted at her in a high, tormented voice and told her to go home. She sought out Maggi and reported the strange behaviour.

" Was he crying ? " Maggi asked.

" Yes," the perplexed girl replied.

" I can't explain it," Maggi said. " Every time you think you understand a white man, something like this happens. But I noticed that whenever one of my men cried I could start packing his things."

" Why are white men so hard to understand ? " Teuru asked.

" Because they're all fools," Maggi explained.

" But you yourself said there were some wonderful white men on Bora Bora."

" Yes, but they were Americans."

" But Hedy told me that when the major found she was going to have a baby, he cried."

" What about ? " Maggi asked suspiciously.

" About his wife in America."

Maggi shrugged her shoulders. " It's as I said. White men are very strange."

Victor returned late that night. Lighting a small lamp by Teuru's bed, he scanned the poetry he had tried to write. It was apparently very bad, for one by one the sheets were burned. Teuru feigned sleep and watched him. Then finally she asked, " Have you nothing you want to keep ? "

Startled, he dropped a flaming page and had to extinguish it with his foot. When he had done so he sat on Teuru's bed and held her dark head close to his. " Yes," he muttered. " I have one thing to keep."

" What ? " she inquired prosaically.

" My memory of you."

Then, as if he wished to explain exactly the meaning of this day, he launched into a long apostrophe to the fact that in the midst of a dying and degenerate world he had found one clean, pure symbol of the ancient grandeur : Teuru's placid beauty.

" What's ' placid ' mean ? " she asked.

He realized that she had not understood anything of what he was trying to say, and she, realizing that he did not intend making love, sighed and pulled away. " I've got to sleep," she said. " I must be up early."

When she rose, he had gone. He did not return and she heard that he had slept on the hotel floor like an ordinary tramp. When the *Hiro* arrived Major came running in with her childish news : " Victor go away ! "

At first Teuru felt nothing. Victor was going back to France. Good. She went about her work, but as she did so she saw a vision of the young sailor in crisp whites, with a forbidden red pompom on his hat, and she burst from the house and dashed along the dusty road to the dock.

The *Hiro* was standing out into the channel, but she could see Victor against the railing. She was disposed to call out to him, but instead she stayed among the shadows and watched the boat recede into the distance.

It was strange. As a girl she had often come to see the *Hiro* sail, and aboard there might be some girl she had never really liked, but at the moment of departure she would break her heart with weeping over the loss of this unimportant girl. Now Victor was leaving and she felt nothing.

But then he put his hand over his eyes, as if he were shielding them from the morning sun in order to locate someone on the quay. She started to wave her hand and cry " Victor ! " but she realized that the *Hiro* was already too far from shore.

Maggi with fortitude wiped her eyes and announced, " We must forget him. Look ! " And she produced a ticket for Teuru on the next *Hiro*.

" Only this time," Povenaaa begged, " an American. Please."

There was a sombre quality in Teuru's return to Papeete. The day was overcast and the brooding hills were enveloped in fog. Along the beautiful quay there was a gaping wound : the *Jean Delacroix* was missing. There were no sailors with red pompoms, and the waterfront looked as if it had been betrayed. Even Hedy's yacht was gone.

But Hedy herself was waiting at the gangplank. The slim girl had a scar across her right cheek. After she had fallen into Teuru's strong arms she said, " He hit me with a dish. Night before he sailed."

" Was he a good man ? " Teuru asked.

"Pretty good," Hedy said reflectively. "I managed a lot of presents and some money."

"What are you doing now?" Teuru asked as she trudged back to her old job at the Montparnasse.

"I have another American," Hedy reported.

"You're lucky," Teuru said.

At the hotel Frau Henslick screamed, "So you've come back! Put your things in your old room. There's a Hikeroa girl in there now. Kick her out. She's no good."

Teuru was unpacking when the German landlady returned and announced, "Under no circumstances are you to give any food to that bastard Johnny Roe."

Teuru was quite unprepared for what she saw. In bed lay the young American, very drunk. That was normal, but the once neat room was a shambles. Clothes were scattered everywhere, men's and women's, and as she picked her way among them she saw that Hedy was perched in the armchair, peeling an orange.

"Surprise!" Hedy cried. "I live here now!"

"Let's have the ice," Mr. Roe moaned.

"Don't worry about him!" Hedy laughed. "This is no yacht, but Johnny's a lot more fun."

"You ought to keep the room cleaned up."

"Johnny don't care. And besides, I can see where things are."

Mr. Roe was in as bad a condition as his room. His face was a pallid white and his hair needed cutting. "I think he ought to have a doctor," Teuru said.

"He's drunk."

"How does he live?"

"Traveller's cheques. They're wonderful."

"Then why don't you pay his bills? So I can bring him food?"

"We go out to eat now and then," Hedy assured her, but it was obvious that most of the money went for her clothes and his gin.

So from time to time Teuru spent her own money to provide a decent meal for Mr. Roe. She delivered it secretly so that neither Hedy nor Frau Henslick could berate her.

One day she was sure that Mr. Roe was dying, but that very evening he and Hedy appeared at Quinn's. He was handsome in pressed whites. Hedy was breathtaking in a halter bra, a sweeping dirndl and gold slippers. Mr. Roe recognized Teuru and asked her to dance.

"I must owe you a lot of money," he apologized.

"You ought to stay sober and eat more," she advised.

She hoped that he would invite her to dance again, but he soon became staggeringly drunk and danced no more. There were moments, these days, when Teuru was almost unhappy. She would step out of the hotel and see that gaping empty space where the *Jean Delacroix* had anchored, and she would recall Victor and his flashing white uniform. At such moments she would wish that somehow they could have married.

But it was difficult for Teuru to remain melancholy for long. Her

happy bubbling nature would assert itself and she would be swept once more into the rich pattern of Papeete life. In the evenings she would walk through the colourful streets, her head high, and she would find a dozen things to laugh at : tourists avoiding Chinamen as if they were killers, little girls acting like big girls and whistling at sailors, a Paumotu fisherman wrestling with a turtle.

One night she stood for some time chuckling at a tiny Chinese seamstress trying to fit a very sour white woman with a white dress. Teuru's eyes bubbled with merriment as she watched the white woman trying to look important. Then she heard a rasping voice cry, " Don't move. Keep the light on your face."

She turned and saw a wretched little man of more than forty, pencil in hand, sitting in a doorway. His head was large and dirty. His clothes were borrowed and also dirty. His teeth were bad, and he was sketching Teuru's head.

He showed her the sketch. " That's you," he said.

On that first night she talked a long time with Earl Weebles, even bought him some beer, which they shared in a grubby cantina while he explained what sculpture was. " I can take a piece of marble," he began. Then he laughed nervously and said, " Damned little marble I see these days. But I can take mud or cement or even butter. And a human being grows right out of it."

" I don't believe you," Teuru laughed.

So he took her to his small room, and for five successive evenings she returned and posed for him while he hacked away at a chunk of tree he had somehow lugged into the room. " You understand," he said in his rasping voice, " that I can't pay you."

But she was so convinced that this little man loved what he was doing that she sat willingly, amused by his earnest comment. " England's a rotten place to live," he said. " Too cold. I almost died there. Tuberculosis. But I always dreamed of Tahiti."

" How did you get here ? " she asked.

" Damned near didn't. Got caught passing bad cheques."

" Where did you learn to carve ? "

" Never learned. Just started one day. I used to spend my last penny on museums. Went to Paris, too. Fine museums there. You ever been to Paris ? "

" I've only been here twice," she laughed.

" You are very beautiful," he said. " Now ! Would you like to see yourself ? "

He stepped aside and allowed Teuru to see her portrait. She was astonished that wood could be hacked away until it looked like a human head : " My face isn't as lumpy as that ! "

He explained, " I didn't try to make your face exactly as it is. I wanted to show it springing from the deep heart of Polynesia."

" What do you mean ? " she asked.

" Your people," he said earnestly. " They are the most beautiful human beings I've seen. You are intended to represent them all." Then he tied a rope round the head and started lugging it into the street. " We'll see if we can sell it."

He hawked it through Quinn's, but nobody wanted it. He tried the Col Bleu with no more luck. There was a steamer in from Sydney and he offered it for two hundred francs, five dollars, thirty bob, any sum at all. He asked Teuru to stand beside it so the passengers could see the likeness.

" Don't look much like 'er," an Australian fireman growled, but he bought it for ten shillings. With the money Weebles took Teuru to Quinn's and ordered drinks. He danced, too, coming not quite as high as her forehead. Later, in his studio, he uncovered a three-foot piece of marble and said, " I've been saving this for something worthy of it. Would you pose for me ? "

" Sure," she laughed, resuming the chair.

" I mean . . . undressed ? "

She slipped off her clothes and stood in the wavering light, unconsciously assuming a pose that illustrated her strong peasant blood. " It is perfect ! " Weebles said, but on that night when Teuru first stood in his room, he did not start to work upon the statue.

Teuru now entered upon a complicated life. During the day she listened to Frau Henslick's ranting. Occasionally she slipped out to get Mr. Roe some food, and in the evenings she posed for Earl Weebles as he carved out the series of heads and torsos that he peddled hopelessly through the streets of Papeete. But once after midnight, as she was preparing her bed in the studio, where she now slept, Weebles started to cough and blood came.

Often Teuru had seen this blood-cough in the islands and she knew its meaning. She tried to stifle her cry of pain, but it escaped, and Weebles, with his death sentence smeared redly upon his fingers, said, " That's why I stole money to get out here."

" But you mustn't stay in this tiny room."

" I can work here. That's what matters."

" No ! " she protested. " You are killing yourself."

" What else can I do ? " the pathetic little man asked, chopping away at his work.

" You can come home with me," she said simply.

She would accept no argument. Earl Weebles was dying, that was plain, and if he remained in this narrow, choked Papeete hovel he would die very soon. But in Povenaaa's big house in Raiatea he might live for many years.

Accordingly, she took her savings to the shipping office near the cathedral and said, " I want two tickets to Raiatea. There'll be a lot of baggage." She spent three days trying to sell Earl's accumulated statuary but in the end she had to give it away. His tools she packed and sent aboard the *Hiro*.

As the little ship rolled northward to the rich vanilla lands, it would have been natural for the eighteen-year-old girl to wonder why she, a girl of bubbling vitality, should be dragging along with her a consumptive and dying Englishman, old and ugly ; but she did not engage in such speculation because what she was doing had been done in Polynesia since the first day Captain Cook discovered the islands.

The natives, rich and happy in their relaxed life, had instinctively reached out to protect the embittered or confused or deteriorated white man. It was a rare Polynesian family that did not have a record of some outcast cured of despair. The easy-going, sun-drenched natives kept white men as families near London or New York might keep beloved puppies.

The wastrels were welcome to hang around the cool porches. They were welcome to sleep with the unmarried daughters. And if the time ever came when they were able to return to what they called civilization, there was a pang of regret in the bosom of the Polynesian family that had—perhaps only for a brief period—protected them as treasured pets.

So on the northward journey Teuru stood bare footed, her fine head and chest thrust forward to shield little Earl Weebles from the rain.

The arrival in Raiatea was not gala. Maggi took one look at the little shrimp and washed her hands of the whole affair. "Another passage wasted," she snorted, adding in a loud voice so that all on the dock could hear, "They tell me, however, that Hedy caught herself another rich American."

To Povenaaa an Englishman was no better than a Frenchman. He made it a point to stumble over chunks of statuary and then moan as if his shin had been fractured. At night he would sit on his porch and shout across to Maggi, "I wanted a jeep and look what I got. A stonemason that don't even know how to build a house."

But Povenaaa's troubles were only beginning. Teuru made him haul clay to Weebles' room and big rocks and stumps of trees. She bought him not a jeep but a broken-down old mare, and it became a common sight to see sweating Povenaaa, his pants slipping down, straining along the roads, cursing bitterly while he dragged behind some huge object that raised a storm of dust and flies.

For the closer Earl Weebles came to death, the grander became his designs. His largest group showed Povenaaa, Maggi and Teuru standing by the prow of a ship at the critical moment when it hesitates at the edge of the ocean.

Povenaaa was transmuted into a fearless navigator. Maggi was the symbolic matriarch bearing food and determination into the canoe. Teuru was pregnant, carrying the seed of Polynesia to a new part of the world. In this majestic group there were no fragments of a dying race, no wormy, whining Povenaaa. Here was depicted the dayspring of Polynesia.

It was this way with every statue Weebles carved. He did not record the death about him in Raiatea, for in the midst of his own death he saw life. He witnessed the eternal on-springing of humanity, and in his Raiatea pieces he created a testament of life. Consider only his figure of the fisherman. He wanted to use Povenaaa for this, but Teuru's father said he'd be damned if he'd take off his clothes again for that shrivelled-up Englishman. So Weebles found an old man, useless for anything, and handed him a spear. What evolved was the figure of a man rich in years, poised for one last try at the reef bonito.

There was grandeur in the sagging belly-line, compassion in the old head.

Earl Weebles saw these things. He said, " Raiatea is the most beautiful spot on earth." It was also apparent that he considered Teuru the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Endlessly he copied her placid beauty. She would come home from working the vanilla vines, laughing, her hair about her waist, barefooted and strong, and he would insist that she stop just as she was, and he would prepare the sketch upon which he would work that night.

It was curious that she never thought of him as an artist. He was merely an unfortunate man who needed a last home. She worked for him, posed for him, slept with him and comforted him when coughing spells attacked. She even enlisted the aid of her cautious employer, Kim Sing.

This happened when she found that Weebles needed new tools, a sketch book and some medicine. Her own money had been used up and Povenaaa had none. So she went to Kim Sing. " Why do you need so much money ? " he asked.

" To buy rocks with."

" Rocks ! "

" Please, M'sieur Kim. My friend needs many things."

" Can he pay back the loan ? "

" He could give you a piece of sculpture, perhaps ? "

The canny business man laughed. " None of that stuff ! "

" Then I'll pay it back," Teuru said.

" How ? "

" You yourself said I was your best workman."

" Are you in love with this man ? "

" Of course not."

" Then why do you seek the money ? "

" Because he's very sick," she said.

By such persistence Teuru mustered the help of many people on behalf of Earl Weebles. In time she even wore down fat Maggi's contempt, whereupon she arranged for the sculptor to take his lunch at Maggi's, so that he could have hot food.

" I don't object to feeding you," Maggi puffed. " Most island families have some no-good fellow eating their food sooner or later."

" Why do you tolerate it ? " Weebles asked humbly.

" When I was young I liked to have a white man around. It was fashionable."

Weebles wiped his chin and said, " I could never express in words . . ."

" I know," Maggi broke in. " I must say that for you. You're grateful. You take the French poet that lived with Teuru last year. What a simpleton ! Used to ask me, ' Maggi ? Where has the grandeur gone ? ' I told him if he ever got a good hold on Hedy he'd have more grandeur than he could handle."

" The grandeur gone ? " Weebles repeated incredulously. " I've never seen such grandeur before. The hills quiver with meaning."

" And you haven't seen Hedy yet ! " Maggi added. In time she grew to like the wizened Englishman. " Weebles ! " she cried one day. " Why don't you move over here with me ? "

The little man looked up in amazement at the woman who weighed more than twice as much as he.

" Not that," she roared, banging the table until the plate of fried fish clattered. " I was thinking that if you left Povenaaa's . . . If I took care of you . . . then Teuru could go back to Papeete."

" Does she want to go ? " Weebles asked quietly.

" Of course she does. She's got to catch herself a rich American."

There was a long silence, one of those hazy, fly-buzzing pauses during which the bedraggled Englishman stared at the fat woman. Finally he muttered, " I won't be there much longer."

" The sickness ? " Maggi asked, banging her chest. " It's bad, eh ? " Weebles nodded and Maggi changed the subject abruptly, " But you've got to do something with all that junk."

" What junk ? "

" Those heads. Those things you carve."

That was when she started hauling one piece after another down to the *Hiro*, peddling them among the passengers. She sold by weight, asking a dollar a pound, but she was usually so sweaty and puffing when she lugged the stuff aboard that she would accept any reasonable offer. Weebles was delighted. He had, in his lifetime, sold very few pieces and he glowed with satisfaction when Maggi reported good luck.

Weebles loved beer and in the evening, when a sale had been made, he would stand treat at Le Croix du Sud. Once, as Teuru raised the amber glass to her amber lips, the sculptor stopped, enraptured. He put down his glass, deeply affected, and begged to be excused. They heard him coughing outside and he waited in the road until Teuru left the bar. They walked through the deserted streets, down to the wharf where the sweet vanilla beans were waiting shipment.

" I've never been able to talk well," he said.

They had never said much, Teuru and Weebles, but this night great agitation gnawed him and he said, " You're very young . . ." but the precise words would not come, and he stood there by the straits from which the great navigators had set forth. His hands reached for hers and he felt the subtle structure of her bone and flesh. Finally he blurted out, all at once, " You have wasted these months on me."

There was a world more he wanted to say, but he was silent, an inchoate chunk of confusion which no chisel like his own had ever quite polished to completion. When they got home he begged her to pose for him once again, and Teuru stood there naked in her father's room. The statue was never completed, for that night he died.

He was buried, as he would have wished, near the straits of Raiatea. When the funeral was over Povenaaa said, " Now we can get some of this junk out of here."

He ordered the whole collection to be hauled away, but this was a silly command because he had to do the hauling. The smaller pieces he gave to people about the island who had posed for Weebles at one time or another. But he was stuck with the big ones. He tried to make Maggi take some, but she would have none of them.

" If I look like a blown-up whale," she snorted, " I at least don't want a picture of me around the house."

It was Maggi who finally talked some sense into Teuru's head. She said, " It's all very well to be nice to men. A girl ought to be. Lord knows, I was in my day. But it's also necessary to look out for yourself. How do you suppose I bought this house ? A rich American, that's how. Now you get on back to Tahiti and find yourself a real man."

She bought Teuru her third ticket to Papeete and whispered consolingly as the *Hiro* blew its whistle, " You've had a no-good Frenchman and a half-dead Englishman. Get yourself a strong American and start having babies."

This time Hedy did not meet Teuru at the Papeete quay. Alone, the nineteen-year-old girl trudged back to the Hotel Montparnasse where to her surprise Frau Henslick greeted her with an embrace. " You're the only girl I've ever been able to trust," she shouted. " That Hikeroa girl has your room again. Throw the tramp out."

Cautiously Teuru motioned up the stairs with her thumb. " Hedy still here ? "

Frau Henslick put down her pencil and beamed. " She's the smart one. She's married."

" To the American ? "

" That good-for-nothing drunk ? " And although Teuru could hear no disturbance, Frau Henslick suddenly screamed, " Shut up, you lazy bastard."

" What's the matter with him ? " Teuru asked.

" Nothing. Hedy stayed around till the traveller's cheques were used up. Then she married this rich Austrian refugee. He runs the new curio shop."

Frau Henslick directed Teuru along the quay to a bright new store. Inside, a nervous Austrian tended the shop, hovering like a frightened humming-bird above trays of exquisite jewellery. " Is Hedy here ? " Teuru asked.

The Austrian fluttered to the back of the shop and with obvious uxoriousness called for his wife. In a moment she appeared, gloriously pregnant.

She posed for a moment beside her birdlike mate and then said, " M'sieur Kraushoffer—you must never call him Herr Kraushoffer. He wants no more of that. He's a real sculptor, not like that dirty Englishman." She pointed out the delicate filigree work M'sieur did. " It sells very well."

In proof she led barefooted Teuru on to the pavement and pointed to a spanking new car. " Ours," she said simply. She made Teuru climb in, and they took turns blowing the horn. Then she kissed her

friend and whispered, " M'sieur Kraushoffer has a rich friend. Tonight put on your best dress and eat with us."

The dinner was excellent, and Hedy was quite the grandest lady Teuru had ever seen. She gave commands to the servants telling them what they must do, served the wine with a dazzling smile and continually referred to her husband's cleverness.

The other guest was a moody Bavarian, Herr Brandt. He was, he announced, considering a business in Tahiti. He used many words that Teuru did not understand and wound up by trying to rip off all her clothes. She was not averse to love-making, for Maggi had long ago instructed her that this was natural for a girl after she was fifteen and that men seemed to enjoy it greatly. But Teuru compared rough, cold Herr Brandt with kind, gentle Earl Weebles and, as a logical conclusion, she smashed the German across the nose and ran back to the hotel.

In the morning Hedy appeared. She was furious, said that Teuru had insulted her husband's friend and that she must never come back to the shop again. Never. Tears followed with Hedy admitting that Herr Brandt had tried to do the same with her once, and that she had struck him too.

She gave Teuru a wrist-watch and said, " Take it up to Johnny. We broke up in a terrible row, and I stole most of his things. But I'm not mad at him any more." She fluffed out her pretty dress, said good-bye, and walked down the quay, calling " Bon jour " to all the other respectable married women of the town.

In a dark room, surrounded by filthy confusion, red-headed Johnny Roe lay sprawled on a bed he had not left for four days. He had not shaved. He had not washed. He had not eaten. He was a horrible caricature of a man, so that even the stray island girls now let him alone at night.

" Mr. Roe ! " Teuru called gently. In a month-old stupor he rolled his head slightly and stared at her.

" Who's there ? " he mumbled.

" I've brought your watch back. You must get up." She threw him a pair of shorts and insisted that he should crawl into them, but when she tried to lead him along the hallway to the bathroom he collapsed. She washed and shaved him, holding his face tightly when the blunt razor jibbed. He was bleeding when she finished, but he was beginning to look like a human being.

It was three days before he could walk to a meal. During that time Teuru had actually to chew small portions of meat and place them between his lips. She had also to buy him the gin he whimpered for, giving him a little less each day until she had weaned him back to strength.

Frau Henslick was outraged. She said that Johnny Roe should be tossed into the bay. " Shark's meat ! That's what he is ! " She said that as soon as he could move she was going to have him tossed into gaol. And as for that room ! Out he must go !

Teuru solved this by moving him down to her room, and it was there, in a grubby back hallway of the Montparnasse, that she finally

learned how truly sweet it was to be in love. It was as Maggi had said, " Quiet bits of heaven." For Johnny Roe had come so close to wrecking himself that he could appreciate what Teuru had done for him. She husbanded their wealth and spent it on things that would be good for Johnny. It was very good to watch him come alive.

" What happened to you ? " she asked.

" I'd always heard about these islands. After the war I wanted to see them."

" Were you in the war ? "

" Like everyone else."

" Why is it so many white men want to come to Tahiti ? "

" You've got to have somewhere you want to go," he replied.

" What did you want to find ? "

" You, I guess."

" We're out of money," she replied, changing the subject.

" I'll have to get a job—somewhere."

" What can you do ? " she asked.

" Best thing I ever did was fly a plane."

" Maybe I can figure out something," she said.

And that was how Teuru, Povenaaa's daughter, finally arrived one day in Raiatea with an honest-to-God American. As the *Hiro* docked, Maggi and Povenaaa waited ecstatically. They studied the clean-shaven, good-looking young man and Maggi cried in Polynesian, " I knew you could do it ! "

It was a very different story, however, when the four of them faced the rancid butter of Le Croix du Sud. Povenaaa got right to the point. " I'd better hurry over to Bora Bora, because there's only one jeep left."

" You buying a jeep ? " Johnny inquired.

Povenaaa winked broadly and patted Johnny on the arm. " It's good to see you here, son. How long d'you intend to stay ? "

" As long as Kim Sing . . . that's his name, isn't it ? "

" You know our leading merchant ? " Povenaaa asked expansively.

" Not exactly. I hope to work for him, though."

" Work ? " Maggi gulped.

" Did you say work ? " Povenaaa gaped.

" Yes. Teuru told me . . ."

Now Povenaaa became all diplomacy. " Do you mean," he probed, " that you have to work ? "

" Yes."

" You mean . . . you're broke ? "

" That's right. If it hadn't been for Teuru . . ."

This was more than man could bear. Povenaaa became choleric and then spluttered, " Pigs ! Dogs ! Chickens ! " What this meant he did not stop to explain. In majestic outrage he stamped from the hotel and did not show his face in the bar for three days. As for Maggi, she sank back in her chair and studied Teuru. Three times she started to ask questions but each time she shuddered and ended by ordering herself more beer.

By this time Kim Sing had opened his vanilla sheds and the rich smell permeated the bar, so Teuru said, "You'll get used to that smell. We'll go now."

She led Johnny across the road and presented him to the merchant. "An American?" Kim replied. "I couldn't pay an American decent wages."

"Any wages would be decent," Johnny confessed.

So each sunny morning Johnny Roe hauled out into the hot sunlight huge tarpaulins bearing the harvested beans, now five to seven inches long, laden with essence which the heat would tease into condition, so that in time the patiently tended beans became pliable and wonderfully odorous. At night he hauled the tarps in out of the dew, and when the beans were cured, he arranged them upright on big tables.

Then Teuru went to work. Sitting with her eyes at the level of the bean tops, she bundled the liquorice-coloured beans into the quarter-kilo packages which were shipped to Paris. She would cull from the large assortment a few choice beans to make the outside of the bundle attractive. For the middle she saved the scrubs, being attentive to select each bean so that when the longer outside ones were pulled into position all beans would appear to be of the same length. Kim Sing said that Teuru's deft bundling earned him an extra twenty per cent.

These were happy days for Teuru. She watched Johnny thriving under the new regime and saw that he was growing brown and strong. It was fun, too, to have him working with her and she enjoyed watching him spend the money she allowed him at the bar. He drank only beer himself, but he was a great favourite with the young men of Raiatea, standing them whisky and gin, beating them at darts. Sometimes Teuru told herself that she had been luckier than most girls, and the more she grew to love Johnny the more clearly she remembered frightened Victor and triumphant Earl Weebles. One night she told Maggi, "I've been lucky."

Maggi leaned back to count up the score. "By and large you have been," she agreed.

Only Povenaaa held out. Each time he saw Johnny he was humiliated anew. Pushing his forlorn mare along the roads, the cruelly betrayed man would dream of that last jeep in Bora Bora. Then he would hammer the mare and imagine it was Johnny Roe.

But when Povenaaa did finally accept Johnny, he accepted him completely and said he was the finest American he had ever known. The two men got roaring tight and stopped every stranger on the road to tell them the news. Teuru was going to have a baby!

Yes, Teuru was pregnant. Maggi, of course, had been the first to detect the happy secret and she commissioned Major to dash through the streets informing everyone.

When Povenaaa heard, he left the mare right in the vanilla fields and came storming into the shed and informed Kim Sing, "We're going to the bar to get drunk." Then he had a better idea. He whispered to Johnny, "We'll stick the Chinaman for the drinks." Unctuously he said to Kim, "It wouldn't be a celebration without

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you." So the merchant paid for the bottles and Povenaaa giggled at having made the Chinaman a fool. But Kim Sing had plans of his own and when they were discovered they almost drove Johnny Roe crazy.

It happened one morning when Johnny came to work and found Maggi, Kim Sing, Povenaaa and three other men rolling dice. Teuru stood nearby, watching the game with interest, advising Maggi, "You better try harder! You need three more sixes!"

"What's the game?" Johnny asked.

"Dice," Teuru said.

"I can see that. What's it about?"

Teuru blushed and looked away, so Johnny asked Povenaaa. "Don't bother me now," the excited man cried. Suddenly there were shouts of triumph and Maggi swore the Chinaman had cheated, but Kim Sing grinned happily and picked up the dice.

"The damned Chinaman gets the baby," Povenaaa spat.

"Gets what?" Johnny asked.

"The baby."

"Whose baby?"

"Teuru's."

"I didn't know Teuru had a baby."

"She hasn't . . . yet."

"You mean . . . my baby?" Johnny fell back with his mouth gaping. Then he yelled, "Hey! What's this about my baby?"

"He won it," Maggi said disconsolately.

Grabbing Teuru the American cried, "What are they talking about?"

"When it's born," Teuru said. "All the people in Raiatea would like to have it. So we rolled dice."

"But it's your own baby!" he stormed.

"Sure," she said. "But I can't keep it. I'm not married."

"Your own flesh and blood!"

"What's he mean?" Teuru asked Maggi.

Johnny Roe looked beseechingly at the fat woman and asked, "Would you give away your own baby? Would you give away Major?"

The crowd in the vanilla shed burst into laughter and Johnny demanded to know the joke. "It's Major!" Povenaaa roared, punching Johnny in the ribs. "Major's not her baby. She's Hedy's."

"You mean that Hedy . . ."

"Of course," Maggi explained. "Hedy had to go to Tahiti for a good time before settling down. So she gave me Major."

Johnny Roe had heard enough. He stormed off and bought two bottles of gin, and when Teuru found him he had returned to his Montparnasse days except that now he blubbered, "Our baby! You raffled off our baby with a pair of dice!"

He kept this up for a whole day and Teuru became afraid that it was the start of another epic binge, so she broke the gin bottles and

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said, " All girls give away their first babies. How else could they get married ? "

Johnny sat upright, suddenly sobered. " What do you mean, married ? "

" What man in Raiatea would want a girl who couldn't have babies ? "

" You mean . . . the men don't care ? "

" Very much ! Since people find I'm to have a baby several men who never noticed me before have asked when you were going away."

" What happens then ? " Johnny asked suspiciously.

" Then I get married."

Johnny fell back on his pillow and moaned, " It's indecent. By God, it's indecent."

So Teuru consulted Maggi, who said, " I'll talk to him." She puffed into the bedroom and asked, " What are you moaning about ? "

" This whole affair. It's indecent."

" What's wrong about it ? Tell me, why did you come out here ? "

" I was a drunken Papeete wreck, so Teuru brought me here."

" I mean why did you come to Tahiti ? "

" Well, in California I was even a worse wreck."

" Why ? "

" The war, I guess."

" We had a war, too."

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ICS

"Mine was different."

"Oh, no. Eighty men from Raiatea volunteered and went into the desert with the Foreign Legion. We lost many men from Raiatea."

"They have a statue in Canada which says something about the ones who didn't come back being the lucky ones."

"Don't ever believe it! Is that what you thought, Johnny?"

"Something like that. I got all mixed up."

Maggi started to laugh. "I'll never understand white men."

"How do you mean?" Johnny asked.

"Like you," she said, puffing heavily. "You get sick at heart about something, so you come out here to cure the disease, and when you're cured you despise us for how we manage it. That seems ridiculous to me."

"It's even more ridiculous, how a girl's own father—how Povenaaa can send Teuru to Papeete."

Maggi exploded with laughter. "Povenaaa? Did you say Povenaaa?" She held her fat sides and shook her head hilariously. "Didn't anybody tell you? Povenaaa could have no children. That poor skinny man. We felt sorry for him in Raiatea so somebody gave him a baby to bring up."

"Who did?"

"I did."

Johnny Roe was stopped dead cold. They were pitching curves at him now and he was stopped cold. He started to laugh and finally kissed fat Maggi on the cheek. Seeing her chance, she grabbed him by the hair and kissed him back.

Johnny finally sat on the bed and asked, "How did you come to give up Teuru?"

"I heard the rich Americans were coming to Papeete . . . about the time of Zane Grey. I wanted to see things before I married."

"Did you marry?"

"Oh, yes."

"Where's your husband?"

"He was killed in the war. In the desert."

That was that. Johnny had no more to say, but as she left, Maggi added, "When you get back home . . . well, if you should ever make any money, send Povenaaa a jeep."

But Povenaaa did not have to wait for such a miracle, for a more astonishing one took place right on Raiatea. One morning, about seven, a yacht put into the straits and an expensive launch, manned by men in white, hurried ashore. An elderly gentleman with white moustaches asked many questions at Le Croix du Sud and ended by going to Kim Sing's vanilla shed. He stood in the doorway for a moment until his eyes became accustomed to the shadows. Then he saw what he was seeking.

"Hello, Johnny," he said.

The young American turned, clean, bronzed, solid-looking: "Hello, Mr. Winchester."

"I told your father I'd look you up."

" How is Dad ? "

" Fine, fine. I think he'd like to have you back."

That night on the polished yacht Povenaaa and Maggi ate off silver plates, but Teuru was not there. " I'm too fat," she told Johnny, insisting that he should go. After brandy, Mr. Winchester said he thought it was about time for Johnny Roehampton to be heading home. Johnny blushed nervously and agreed it was about time.

" He's been here long enough," Maggi said expansively.

" Too long," Povenaaa observed.

Johnny had much to do before shoving off. He thanked Kim Sing for the job. He gave presents to each of the gang at the bar. He bought Maggi a shawl and even promised to send Povenaaa a jeep.

But Povenaaa had been disappointed many times in his life and he was not to be taken in by any more tricks, so while Johnny was packing he rowed out to the yacht and consulted Mrs. Winchester. " I don't ask much," he said. " I'm reasonable, but I've had dreadful bad luck with Teuru."

" Who's Teuru ? "

" My daughter."

" Is she sick ? "

" No, she's pregnant."

Mrs. Winchester gulped. " You mean . . . she isn't . . . married ? "

" Certainly not ! " Povenaaa snapped. " It's my bad luck with her men I'm speaking of."

" What do you mean, her men ? "

" I don't think she has good sense," Povenaaa explained. " First she brings home a Frenchman. He lives with us eight months and I don't get a sou. Then she brings home an Englishman. Not a sou. Now it's Johnny Roe. Still no money."

Mrs. Winchester grew pale. " You mean . . . you would take money . . . for your daughter ? "

" Well, seeing that Johnny is leaving behind a baby that I'll have to feed . . . "

Weakly Mrs. Winchester cried, " Griswold ! Griswold ! " When her husband appeared she whispered, " Get this creature out of here."

" What's going on ? " Mr. Winchester blustered.

" It's unspeakable ! This wretched man's daughter has had three lovers. Now she's going to have a baby and her father "—she shuddered—" wants to be paid off."

Mr. Winchester took out his wallet and said, " My dear, I warned you that Tahiti . . . "

" Don't give it to him ! Give it to the girl, if she's not some cheap . . . "

" I've seen the girl," Mr. Winchester said. " She's very decent."

He took his wife ashore and led her to the vanilla shed, where she gasped when she saw how lovely Teuru was.

" You're very pretty," Mrs. Winchester said.

" Johnny told me you were an old friend."

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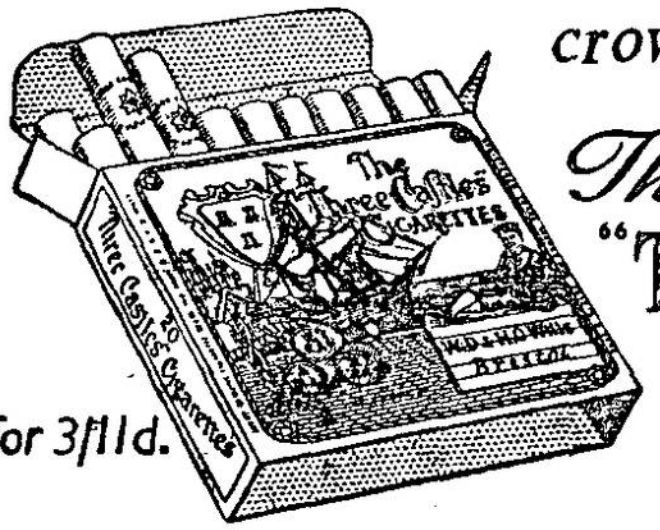

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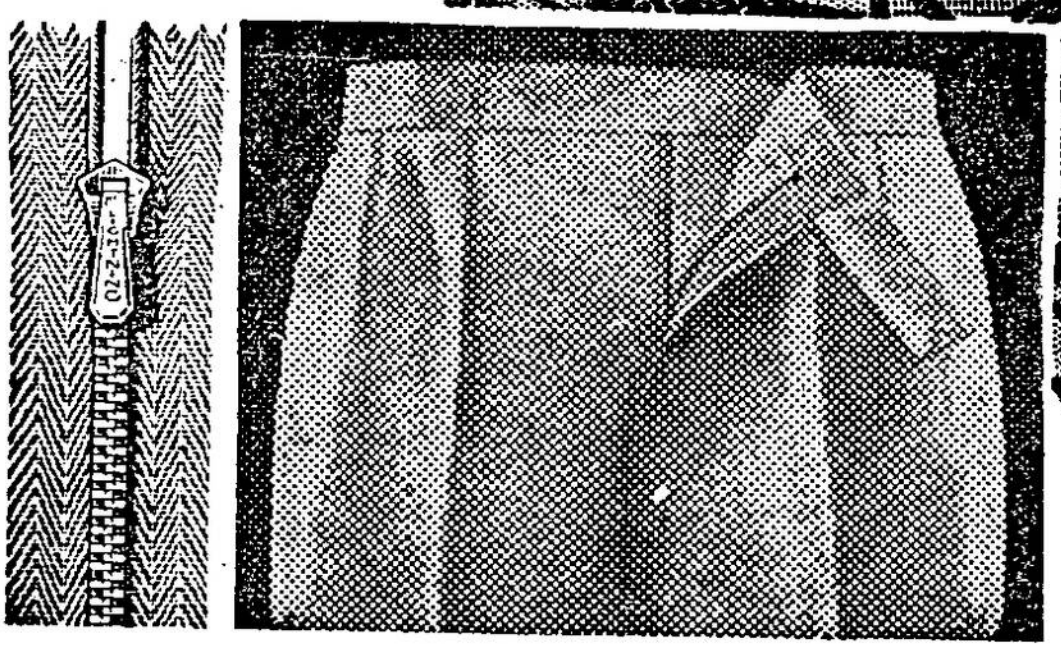

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ICI

LF 129

" Yes, we've known his family for years."

" What will Johnny do . . . when he gets home, I mean ? "

Mrs. Winchester perceived that she had stumbled upon the classic island tragedy : the deserted native girl and the handsome white man. So she said gently, " He'll probably go back to college."

" And get married ? " Teuru asked, smiling warmly as she whipped cords about her bundle of beans.

Mrs. Winchester knew that the brave smile masked the heartbreak of betrayal, so she said consolingly, " And you ? What will you do ? "

Teuru started a new bundle in her left hand and said thoughtfully, " I guess I'll get married, too. After I get rid of the baby."

Mrs. Winchester swallowed. " What do you mean ? Get rid of the baby ? "

" Kim Sing won it. After a few weeks I'll give it to Kim Sing."

" He . . . won . . . it ? " the American woman asked weakly.

" Yes. He threw eleven sixes."

Mrs. Winchester retreated in a flood of nausea.

Yet it was Mr. Winchester's money that finally settled many problems for Teuru. After the yacht left, with red-headed Johnny Roehampton staring at the dock until the headland had been breasted, Povenaaa slipped over to Bora Bora and came home with the last jeep. It was badly battered and carried a garish sign across the front : SHORE PATROL. But it ran and it had a horn.

Povenaaa's first use of it was to drive up to Kim Sing's establishment and blow the horn like mad. When the Chinaman appeared Povenaaa stood up and announced to his former employer, " You, M'sieur Kim Sing can go to hell." Then he drove off down the middle of the road.

Teuru immediately came to apologize. She told Kim he had always been kind to her family and that she appreciated this. " And now what will you do ? " Kim asked.

Teuru looked at the bundles she had tied and said, " After the child is born, Maggi wants me to go back to Papeete."

" Papeete is very fine," Kim said.

" But the rooms are so small and dark. I don't want to leave Raiatea any more."

Kim Sing thought a long time and said, " You should tell your father."

So Teuru sought out Povenaaa at the new pier where he was hauling rock. " I'm not going back to Tahiti," she announced.

To her surprise Povenaaa said, " Good ! We're people of importance now. We still have lots of money left from the yacht." Then, seeing Kim Sing approaching, he shouted, " And no daughter of mine is going to work for a damned Chinaman, either ! "

Kim Sing came to the pile of rocks and said haltingly, " I did not come to ask Teuru to work for me again."

" Then get out of the way. Can't you see I'm a busy man ? "

" I came to ask . . . since Teuru does not wish to leave . . . since I'm to have the baby anyway . . ."

When the meaning dawned on Povenaaa he slammed the jeep into low gear and tried to murder the Chinaman with it. " My daughter ! " he bellowed. " Living with a Chinaman ! "

From behind the rocks the merchant said quietly, " I am not asking her to live with me. I am asking her to marry me."

Then Teuru stepped boldly beside Kim Sing and said, " Yes, Povenaaa, we are going to get married."

Povenaaa let his hands fall from the steering-wheel and started to gulp, but Teuru said softly, " I went to Papeete three times for you. Now I shall stop in Raiatea."

Povenaaa washed his hands of the whole affair. Maggi arranged the wedding and exacted from Kim a written pledge that he would not beat Teuru as some of his countrymen did their wives and that he would allow her spending money so long as she continued to wrap bundles of vanilla. But on one point he was adamant. Povenaaa came snivelling around and said that since his only daughter was leaving home he might as well sell the house, but Earl Weebles' big sculptures still cluttered up the place. " Why not move them into the vanilla shed ? "

But Kim Sing—even though he had sworn not to beat his wife—was not a complete fool. So years later when hungry collectors from London and Paris reached Raiatea they uncovered the precious masterpieces in the most unlikely places. The classic bust of Maggi, for example—the one now in the Louvre—it was found propping open the door to the barn where Povenaaa kept his jeep.

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SOLUTION to ARGOSY CROSSWORD on page 144

Across.—1, Woodpecker. 8, Tower. 9, Twice a week. 10, Petty. 11, Louis. 12, Endorsement. 18, All the year round. 19, Change hands. 25, Aboil. 26, Smear. 27, Woman-hater. 28, Aside. 29, Unilateral.

Down.—1, Wattle. 2, Odious. 3, Please. 4, Cowled. 5, Exeter. 6, Honeymoon. 7, Pertinent. 13, Niece. 14, Opera. 15, Sired. 16, Alchemist. 17, Standards. 20, Heroin. 21, No ball. 22, Sachet. 23, Potter. 24, Plural.

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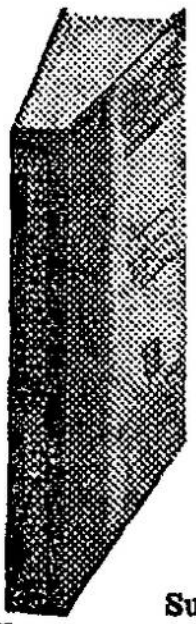

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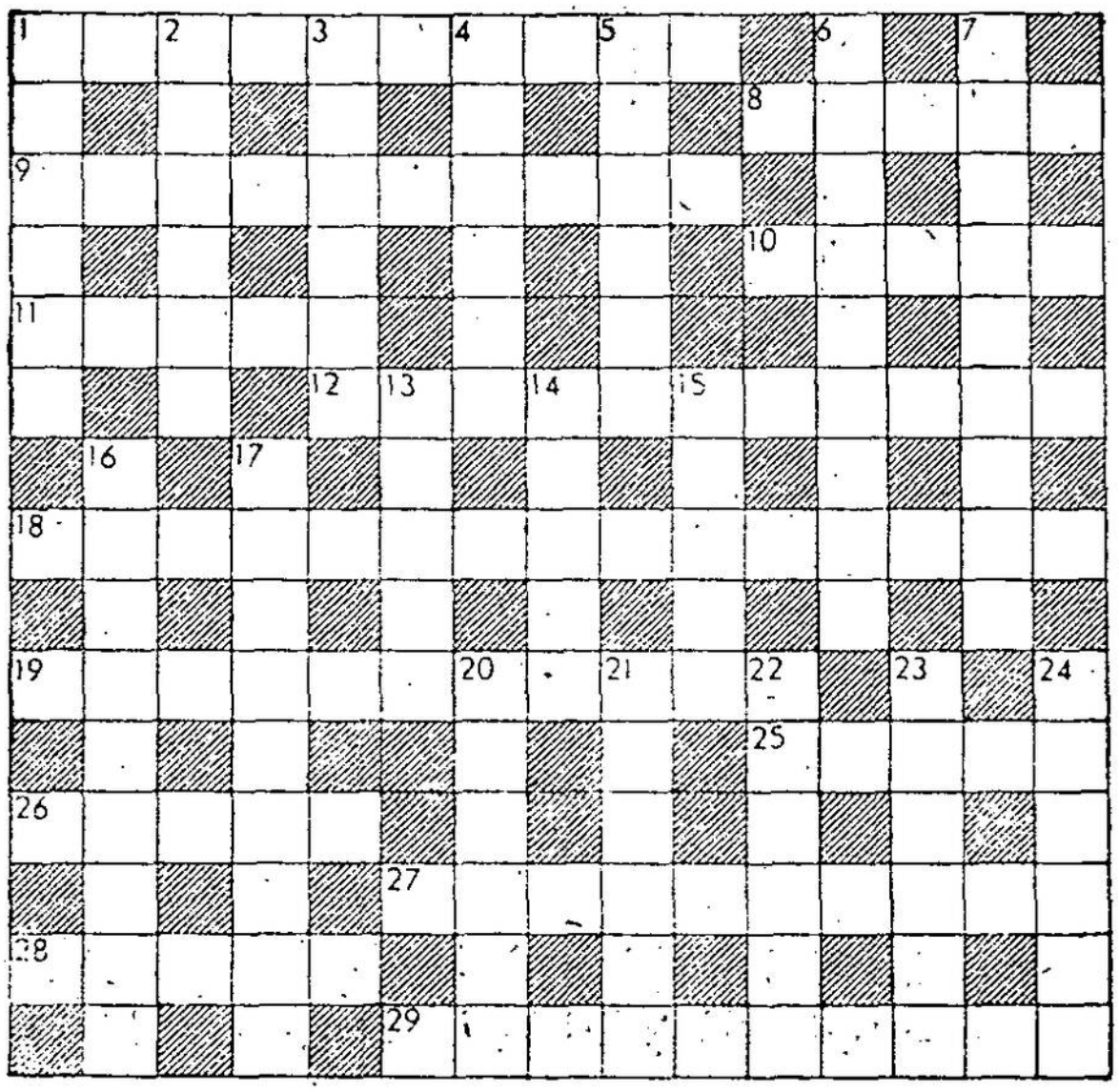
Solution on page 142



CLUES

Across

1 He's always on tap in the forest (10).

8 It was dark when Childe Roland got there (5).

9 The product is more frequently not a fortnight (5, 1, 4).

10 This officer is not insignificant on board (5).

11 He's an old French coin with a golden complexion (5).

12 Make the beginning the end or you won't get confirmation (11).

18 A rally under Theo is always seasonable (3, 3, 4, 5).

19 The firm is to be under new management, including the men at the till (6, 5).

25 A sailor on the tanker is feeling the heat (5).

26 A blot or a landscape ! (5).

27 Hardly a ladies' man (5–5).

28 Not the sort of remark you would expect from a straightforward person (5).

29 There's nothing in a one-sided agreement (10).

Down

1 The best kind of fence to put round a turkey, no doubt (6).

2 Comparatively in bad taste (6).

3 Request that is sure to find favour (6).

4 This animal conduced to chimneys pots being covered (6).

5 A town which stands on its head (6).

6 Sweet planet for an idyll (9).

7 If I'm absent it's not rude at all, simply to the point (9).

13 She's just too big for a delightful spot on the Riviera (5).

14 Grand or comic, it's going for a song (5).

15 Disturbed rides (5).

16 Subtle creation of Ben Jonson (9).

17 Don't fall below them if you want to keep them flying (9).

20 Produce some morphia, the leading man's in need of it ! (6).

21 The dance is off ? That's not cricket ! (2, 4).

22 The saint is torn by pain. Bring perfume to revive him ! (6).

23 " What ! did the Hand then of the —— shake ? " (Omar Khayyam) (6).

24 It's more than singular ! (6).

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Student 357/3015: I have had my story accepted by BLACKWOODS who are paying me £25 for it . . . *Student 778/2119:* I thought it might interest you to know that THE COUNTRYMAN has accepted a short article of mine on an old country custom . . . *Student 184/315.* As you suggested, I submitted the articles to the NEW STATESMAN. One was published on the 17th July I have also had an article accepted by MEN ONLY . . . *Student 181/282:* You may be interested to hear that I had a letter from the Editor of ARGOSY; they have offered me Twenty-five Guineas for my story . . . *Student 591/287:* You will be pleased that my article submitted for my Second Lesson was published in the DAILY MIRROR and I received Six Guineas for it . . . *Student 120/288:* I have established contact with the Editor of PUNCH. The item was accepted for "Charivaria" and is a good start . . . *Student 1179/347:* I succeeded in getting four Big Game stories into COURIER and another about "Shrove Tuesday." Another article appeared in the August issue of BLACKWOODS . . . *Student 1954/157:* I have just corrected a proof of my story for WIDE WORLD; they have since accepted another and I have sent in a third . . . *Student 171/162:* I have sold my story to EVERYWOMAN for 25 guineas . . . *Student 1106/156:* The B.B.C. accepted the script for the Light Programme—fee 9 guineas—after my first lesson . . . *Student 141/76:* The article which I wrote for the Second Test Paper appeared in the SUNDAY MAIL. Thanks for the recommendation. . . . . .